

Open Research Online

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

A Freudian *Dream*: Interpretations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Psychoanalysts and Psychoanalytically Informed Literary Critics

Thesis

How to cite:

Jacobs, Michael (2017). A Freudian Dream: Interpretations of A Midsummer Night's Dream by Psychoanalysts and Psychoanalytically Informed Literary Critics. PhD thesis The Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2016 The Author



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000bd2f>

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk

Michael David Jacobs, M.A. (Oxon), B.A (Open University)

A Freudian Dream: Interpretations of A Midsummer Night's Dream by Psychoanalysts and Psychoanalytically Informed Literary Critics

Submitted for examination for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The Open University
Department of English

30 September 2016

Abstract

The thesis analyses interpretations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Freudian and post-Freudian clinicians, and by literary critics influenced by psychoanalytic theory. The primary material is principally taken from the Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing database, and includes 37 papers or chapters by psychoanalysts and some by psychoanalytically informed literary critics, addressing aspects of the *Dream*. This considerable body of critical analysis of the play has largely been ignored by literary critics. Certain themes in this substantial body of criticism are identified and analysed: how dreams in the play have been variously interpreted psychoanalytically; the clinical interest in dreams within a dream and the relevance of this to the play and to the device of the play within the play; the dark side of the *Dream* including the function of comedy to disguise the play's nightmare quality; and the dominance of oedipal interpretations to the neglect of other aspects of Freud's writing about love. The thesis considers how far psychoanalytic criticism of the play reflects changes in psychoanalytic theory and phases of literary criticism. The thesis highlights the absence of meaningful interaction between Freudian clinicians and literary critics who examine the *Dream* during the same sixty year period from the 1950s, missing opportunities for productive intellectual dialogue. The thesis observes that literary critics refer more than clinicians to more recent psychoanalytic thinking; and that there are places where the clinicians could have enhanced their interpretations by reference to Freud's writing on humour, on love and object choices, on illusion and transference-love. The thesis concludes that psychoanalytic critics of the play make a complementary contribution to literary criticism, and that the papers merit greater prominence in the reception history of the play.

Contents

Preface	1
Introduction	7
Research questions	8
Primary material	8
Psychoanalysis and literary criticism	17
Structure of the thesis	21
1. Interpreting dreams in the <i>Dream</i>	27
Freud on dreams	29
Bottom's dream: Weston A. Gui	32
Gui's analytic method	42
Gui's confidence in psychoanalysis	50
How Gui has been received	55
Gui's contribution to literary criticism	57
Can fictional dreams be psychoanalysed?	64
Hermia's dream: Mervyn Faber (1972)	68
Hermia's dream: Norman Holland (1979)	74
Later psychoanalytic contributions: whose dream is the	

‘ <i>Dream</i> ’?	84
Conclusion	89
2. A dream in a dream and the play in the play	94
Freud: the dream within a dream	95
The dream in a dream after Freud	99
From a dream in a dream to the play in the play	107
A dream in a dream: the play in the play: Alexander Grinstein (1956)	111
<i>Pyramus and Thisbe</i> : psychoanalytic interpretations after Grinstein	117
Comparing <i>Pyramus and Thisbe</i> in psychoanalytic-literary criticism	128
Comparing <i>Pyramus and Thisbe</i> in literary criticism	131
Conclusion	135
3. The dark side of the <i>Dream</i>	139
Melvin Goldstein (1973): Identity crises in a midsummer nightmare	141
Goldstein: nightmare or terror: the function of comedy	150
Goldstein: psychopathology	156
Goldstein: an assessment	164
Goldstein in context	171
Darker interpretations in psychoanalytic-literary criticism	179
Darker interpretations in literary criticism	183
Conclusion	186

4. Beyond the Oedipus complex	189
Freud's 'Contributions to a Psychology of Love'	193
The Oedipus complex – psychoanalytic critics	198
The Oedipus complex – psychoanalytic-literary critics	212
Narcissism	227
Freud and transference-love	234
Idealisation and illusion	238
An alternative to the Oedipus complex	247
Conclusion	254
Conclusion	256
What have psychoanalytic critics, as well as psychoanalytic-literary critics, contributed to the interpretation of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> ?	256
How have shifts in psychoanalytic theory over time influenced changes in psychoanalytic interpretations of the <i>Dream</i> ?	262
What is the purpose of the psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary interpretations of the <i>Dream</i> ?	267
Conclusion	270
References	272

Preface

For more than forty years I have worked as a psychotherapist. My training was psychoanalytic, and I have in my clinical practice and teaching been mainly influenced by psychoanalytic theories. I am essentially a pragmatic therapist, who values different psychoanalytic theories, including much of Freud, but I have never slavishly followed any one person's ideas. In my practice I have drawn upon psychoanalytic formulations only when the client's material justifies their careful application or adaptation to the circumstances. If I have to describe myself more precisely I could be said to favour object relations theory, a largely British development of psychoanalysis. In my teaching and writing I have preferred to use the term a 'psychodynamic therapist' rather than a 'psychoanalytic psychotherapist', principally because such a description does not confine me to psychoanalytic politics or theory.¹ But I am fascinated by psychoanalytic ideas about film, theatre, literature and art.

I once collected first editions of detective fiction by Michael Innes, the *nom-de-plume* of J.I.M. Stewart, an English Literature don at Oxford. Having collected all his novels written under both names, I also sought out his writing as a literary critic, including *Character and Motive in Shakespeare* (1949).² Stewart argues for a psychological portrayal of a number of Shakespeare's characters and supports his arguments with Freudian theory. He was himself very interested in Freud, and psychoanalytic ideas creep into his detective fiction and other novels.

¹ See my books *Psychodynamic Counselling in Action* (London: Sage, 4th edition, 2010), and *The Presenting Past: the Core of Psychodynamic Counselling and Therapy* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 4th edition, 2012).

² J.I.M. Stewart, *Character and Motive in Shakespeare: Some Recent Appraisals Examined* (London: Longmans, Green, 1949).

Reading *Character and Motive* I wondered what psychoanalysts themselves had written about Shakespeare's characters, aware that Freud's colleague Ernest Jones had developed a theory of Freud's that Hamlet's supposed delay in exacting revenge on his father's behalf might be attributed to Hamlet's own repressed oedipal desire to replace his father in his mother's affections. Indeed I was able to purchase Stewart's personal copy of Jones's *Hamlet and Oedipus*, inscribed to Stewart by Jones.³

Upon retirement from the University of Leicester I moved to Swanage and was invited to teach for the WEA. I taught two short courses in successive years on matters of psychological interest; and with my class asking for more I turned in a third year to Shakespeare's characters from a psychoanalytic perspective. Our interest was in how psychoanalytic interpretations might enhance appreciation of the possible psychology of the characters.

I was able to find psychoanalytic papers on a database that I used professionally. The Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing (PEP) database reproduces the complete text of nearly 100,000 articles from psychoanalytic journals, a number of classic psychoanalytic books, and Freud's complete works in English and German. The articles and books cover not only theory and practice but also applied psychoanalysis, illustrating how some psychoanalysts and other contributors, including literary critics, are, like Freud, interested in applying psychoanalytic ideas to literature and the arts, sociology, history, biography and other disciplines.

³ Ernest Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (New York: Doubleday & Co, Inc., 1949).

Drawing upon this database I presented to my WEA class some psychoanalytic thinking about tragic characters such as Othello, Lear, and Macbeth and in a second course Antony, Cleopatra and Hamlet. I also found interesting material on *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Henry IV*. At that time, one of my publishers, asking whether I had anything else to offer, encouraged me to publish much of my material from those two courses, and the subsequent book *Shakespeare on the Couch* was well received in psychoanalytic circles.⁴ Characters in *Hamlet* had generated too much material for the book and so they were omitted, although I later developed a day workshop for training counsellors and psychotherapists called 'Hamlet on the Couch'. In my teaching I also used DVDs of various productions of the plays. I (and I believe my students) found that the observations of psychoanalysts pointed to the possibility of providing insights into the psychology of the characters in the plays, deepening my and their appreciation of the playwright's perception of mental and emotional processes.

Excited by the possibilities of extending these enquiries into Freudian criticism of Shakespeare's plays, I approached the Open University with a view to how I might focus my research in the form of a PhD. Having already studied the tragedies (albeit not at any great depth), I looked to see whether there was much psychoanalytic material on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Freudian criticism of the comedies was relatively under-researched, and there was potential for me to make an original contribution. The plan was that, if necessary, I would extend my research to another comedy or two. As it turned out, I found so much material on the *Dream*, that there was more than enough for my purposes. The play may not have captured the imagination (a term I use advisedly) of psychoanalytic critics quite as much as *Hamlet*, but what I uncovered in the database

⁴ Michael Jacobs, *Shakespeare on the Couch* (London: Karnac, 2008).

and subsequently further afield demonstrated that the play could provoke a variety of interpretations, which I believe, and hope to demonstrate, merit the attention of literary critics.

The body of material on *Dream* included in the psychoanalysis database has been produced in parallel with a vast body of literary criticism on the play, but with very little dialogue between the two, except in the case of a few literary critics who have employed psychoanalytic ideas in their work. Indeed, in several conspicuous instances, the two traditions of *Dream* criticism have been entirely unaware of each other. My preliminary aim therefore was to bring the two traditions into dialogue, and more particularly to introduce the clinical-psychoanalytic tradition to the literary-critical tradition of *Dream* criticism. My arguments about the strengths, weaknesses, and blind spots of the clinical-psychoanalytic tradition are detailed in the Introduction and the chapters that follow.

The process of researching psychoanalytic material has also involved learning much about literary criticism, an area that was relatively new to me. Having two supervisors whose area of interest was early modern English literature, and Shakespeare in particular, has meant a fascinating dialogue with them on the interplay between psychoanalytic and literary criticism. I have learned much from Professor David Johnson throughout and, for the first half of my research, from Dr Richard Danson Brown, and in the second from Dr Jonathan Gibson. They have made invaluable suggestions about the presentation of the material, sharpened my questioning of psychoanalytic interpretations; and have been very supportive in their feedback on the work I have presented to them. My opinions, which they have constantly encouraged me to express, as well as my errors, are of course my own. In thanking them, I also thank my wife Pam for her careful proof

reading of much of the thesis. Any remaining typographical or grammatical errors are mine.

Introduction

Psychoanalytic critics have shown more interest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* than in other Shakespearean comedies or romances. The aim of this thesis is to identify and critically examine the interpretations of the play made by psychoanalysts and by literary critics who are informed by psychoanalytic theory.

Many of the psychoanalytic contributions by clinicians have received little or no attention in literary criticism of the play. Literary critics writing from a psychoanalytic perspective in parallel with clinicians have also generated interpretations of the *Dream*. Throughout the thesis I call these critics psychoanalytic-literary critics to distinguish them both from clinician critics, and from other literary critics who refer either only a little or not at all to psychoanalysis.¹ I argue that the interpretations of *Dream* by clinicians have been neglected and under-valued, and that they represent a critical resource that enriches and complements the exclusively literary-critical tradition of *Dream* criticism.

I show how psychoanalytic criticism of the play tends to remain largely informed by classical Freudian theory; as such it does not take into account changes in psychoanalytic theory and practice, nor of phases of literary criticism from New Criticism to the New Historicism. I note the way that the majority of psychoanalytic critics are highly individualistic, and that, unlike psychoanalytic-literary critics, they rarely refer to literary criticism or even to earlier psychoanalytic criticism of

¹ There are frequent allusions to psychoanalytic terms such as 'repression', 'phallic', etc. in critical essays on the *Dream*, but this usage is distinct from more sustained psychoanalytic interpretations in the particular literary critics whose work I discuss.

the play. It will also be clear that psychoanalytic-literary critics in some cases show greater awareness of different psychoanalytic theories as well as, as one would expect, of different aspects of literary criticism.

Research questions

There is a considerable body of psychoanalytic writing that has specifically addressed Shakespeare's plays, including the *Dream*. In addressing this material my principal questions are

- What have psychoanalytic critics, as well as psychoanalytic-literary critics, contributed to the interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?
- How have shifts in psychoanalytic theory over time influenced changes in psychoanalytic interpretations of the *Dream*?
- What is the purpose of the psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary interpretations of the *Dream*?

Primary material

The primary sources in my research are psychoanalytic journals and other texts authored by practising psychoanalysts. Where literary critics have been included in this thesis it is because they have published articles on the play in psychoanalytic journals, or have contributed chapters to books edited by psychoanalysts.

The first psychoanalytic references to the *Dream* appear on May 31 1892. Freud, in a brief note written then but attached to a letter penned in 1897, mentions the play

twice.² There is also a somewhat obscure reference on May 16 1897 to Puck ‘the Celtic Imp’ in relation to Freud’s excitement about his theory of dreams as wish-fulfilment.³ It is interesting that it is the *Dream* that is the first Shakespeare play he alludes to, some years before Freud discusses the character Hamlet, in a letter about the significance of the play *Oedipus Rex* in October 1897.⁴

The abundance of psychoanalytic articles, chapters, and books on Shakespeare was initially described in three bibliographies that appeared in psychoanalytic publications: Bette Greenberg and Albert Rothenberg compiled an international inventory of ‘medico-psychological and psychoanalytic studies’ on Shakespeare’s life and works in 1974, in the *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, listing 318 scholarly articles and books.⁵ The tragedies outnumber by some way the comedies, histories and poetry. There are just three references to writing on *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

² ‘Draft N’, 1897, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume I (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis), p. 256. The first reference is to Titania: repressed material forces its way to expression, sometimes as a punishment. Hence Titania, who ‘will not love her rightful husband Oberon, is obliged to bestow her love on Bottom, the phantasy ass’. The second is that ‘Shakespeare was right in this juxtaposition of poetry and madness’.

³ J. M. Masson, ed., *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1985), p. 244. Although ‘Robin’ is preferred in most editions of the play, ‘Puck’ is used predominantly in psychoanalytic writing. Only one of the authors in this thesis (Goldstein) refers to Robin Goodfellow and even he uses Puck more frequently. All the others, including the literary critic Thomas Frosch, use Puck alone. I have therefore used the name the psychoanalysts prefer in writing about the play.

⁴ S. Freud, ‘Extracts from the Fliess Papers’, 1897, *Standard Edition*, Volume I, (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1966), pp. 263-6. Freud expands his idea about Hamlet in ‘The Interpretation of Dreams’, 1900, *Standard Edition*, Volume IV (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1953), pp. 264-6. As David Hillman amply demonstrates in his essays on Freud as a great Shakespearean, Freud’s writing is full of many references to Shakespeare’s plays, and of quotations (and misquotations) from them (C. Bartolovich, D. Hillman and J. Howard, *Marx and Freud, Great Shakespeareans*, Vol. X (London: Bloomsbury, 2012) pp. 99-176). It is important to recognise that being a great Shakespearean is not the same as being a great literary critic. Many of the quotations Freud cites, as in these letters, are essentially illustrations, not arguments from a critical examination of Shakespeare’s texts. Neither are the clinicians discussed in this thesis literary critics.

⁵ Bette Greenberg and Albert Rothenberg, ‘William Shakespeare (1564-1616) ‘Medico-psychological and psychoanalytic studies on his life and works: a bibliography’, *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1974), pp. 245–254.

A bibliography by David Willbern published in 1978 is critical of Greenberg and Rothenberg's work on the grounds that it 'confines itself only to "*medico-psychological*" studies, and ... cites writings before Freud' overlooking numerous psychoanalytical works.⁶ His bibliography covers writing published between 1964 and 1975, and includes a remarkable 316 further texts. There are seven references to the *Dream*, with the main focus of psychoanalytic interest again on *Hamlet* with 40 articles listed. The large number of texts published in the 12 years between these two articles might suggest a heyday of psychoanalytic writing on Shakespeare.

A third bibliography in 1993, compiled by Christine Levey, covers the years 1979-89 and lists a further 403 articles and books.⁷ Eight of these further publications refer to the *Dream*, with 39 texts having an obvious connection to *Hamlet*. *Hamlet* provokes the greatest interest, so it is little wonder that psychoanalytic ideas about the *Dream* have attracted less attention.

These bibliographies have been superseded by an online database published since the early 1990s by the Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing (PEP), updated annually so that in 2015 it reproduced in full over 97,000 articles from psychoanalytic journals, with the complete texts in English and some European languages and illustrations from 58 different journals, 96 classic psychoanalytic

⁶ David Willbern, 'William Shakespeare: a bibliography of psychoanalytic and psychological criticism, 1964-1975', *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 5 (1978), pp. 361-71. Willbern took the opportunity to extend the bibliography to 1978 in reproducing his article in Murray M. Schwartz and Coppelia Kahn eds, *Re-Presenting Shakespeare* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

⁷ Christine Levey, 'A bibliography of psychological and psychoanalytic Shakespeare criticism', in B. J. Sokol ed., *The Undiscover'd Country: new essays in psychoanalysis and Shakespeare* (London: Free Associations Press, 1993), pp. 217-48.

books, and the full text of the 24 volumes of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*.⁸ The database assembles all articles and many key texts on psychoanalysis between 1871 (some of Freud's letters) and the present day. Articles in journals published in the previous three years to 2015 consist only of the opening abstract or paragraph, although where the search engine lists more recent instances of the play the text of the articles can be derived from other sources, including the original printed journals.

To date this database has been used almost exclusively by psychoanalysts and psychotherapists. My thesis is the first sustained attempt at extending the resources in the database to Shakespeare criticism. I have searched this database under terms such as the title of the play, and its main characters. I have re-examined the search engine as later years' publications have come online. This thesis includes all relevant articles up to and including the end of 2015.

The database in 2015 lists (sometimes only by way of allusion) 3,338 articles that refer to Shakespeare: 143 of these include a reference to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, although the play *Hamlet* or the character Hamlet again remain the main interest of psychoanalysts with 1,905 articles. Additional articles on the *Dream* are listed when searching for names of the characters, such as the lovers, Theseus and Hippolyta, Titania, Oberon, Puck and Bottom.⁹ Many of these articles make only a slight reference to the *Dream* and cannot be called psychoanalytic criticism,

⁸ Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing: <http://www.pep-web.org>.

⁹ Bottom presents a difficulty, the word being likely to occur in its non-personal form countless times, as one might expect in psychoanalysis's identification of anal issues! In fact, apart from those articles already listed under 'midsummer night's dream' the proper name 'Bottom' only occurs once without reference to the *Dream* in one thousand articles including the word.

although some contain allusions that nonetheless suggest that the author is implying an interpretation of the phrase or the character referred to. Distribution of the psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary references to the play used in this thesis can be seen in the table below, in chronological sequence and referencing their authors' location.

	USA	UK and Europe
1890-1919		[1]
1920-9	[1]	
1930-9		
1940-9		
1950-9	1 [1]	[1]
1960-9	1 [1]	
1970-9	1 [1] 3	2 [1]
1980-9	3 [1] 5	[1]
1990-9	[1] 1	1 [1]
2000-15	2 [1] 1	2 [2]

Table: Psychoanalytic references to the *Dream*

Numbers in black refer to psychoanalytic authors and major papers discussed in the thesis; those in brackets refer to other psychoanalytic authors who make a slight contribution to criticism of the *Dream*, and merit mention in this thesis. The articles by particular psychoanalytic-literary critics to whom I refer are shown in red.

It can be seen from the table how psychoanalytic interest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has grown since the 1950s, with the present century showing little sign of this interest waning. Most authors are American. British contributors are few in number and brief in their contributions when compared to their transatlantic cousins. European contributions are non-existent. This is not just the case with the *Dream*. While Ernest Jones stands out as a British contributor on *Hamlet*, there are only a

handful of significant contributors to the criticism of that most heavily psychoanalysed play from Britain and Europe, with psychoanalytic criticism similarly dominated by American psychoanalysts.

This apparent imbalance can be accounted for by the many more psychoanalysts in the United States than in Britain and Europe. An approximate recent figure of the number of members of the American Psychoanalytic Association is 3100, compared to 400 members of the British Institute of Psychoanalysis. The International Psychoanalytic Association had 12,000 members at the end of 2009 – the USA having one quarter of its world-wide membership. Another reason for American domination of psychoanalytic literary criticism must be attributed to the continuing influence of psychoanalytic ideas on American culture, discussed in chapter 1.

It is also clear from the table that psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream* only begins in the second half of the twentieth century. Up to that point psychoanalysis was establishing itself as a therapeutic discipline, concentrating on theory as it related to therapeutic practice. Although Freud gave a lead in a number of significant papers on art, sculpture and literature (including Shakespearean characters), as well as on religion, anthropology, social psychology and Biblical criticism, there were relatively few incursions by others into applied psychoanalysis and none into *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

There was between the two world wars a journal devoted to applied psychoanalysis, including literary topics, the European *Imago*, which folded following the emigration of European analysts to America and Britain in the 1930s. Its aim,

shared with the later publication *American Imago*, was to promote the non-medical application of psychoanalysis to culture, science and the arts. Freud was to be the first editor of *American Imago*, but died just before the first issue was published in 1939. A number of significant papers on the *Dream* first appeared in its pages.

Some of the contributors to *American Imago* are psychoanalytic-literary critics, specifically identifying themselves with psychoanalytic interpretations of the play. I have occasionally referred to such critics publishing elsewhere, when they write from an obvious psychoanalytic perspective.

In Britain, papers on politics, literature and the arts were delivered at scientific meetings of the British Psychoanalytical Society in the 1920s, applying Freud's ideas to a wide variety of topics apart from treatment of patients.¹⁰ However, in the late 1930s and 1940s the psychoanalytic establishment in Britain and America was adjusting to the exodus of Austrian and German analysts who had fled Nazi Germany.¹¹ By the 1950s, in America in particular, confidence was growing in the application of psychoanalytic theories outside the clinical arena: anything and everything could be subjected to analysis – as is illustrated by the ground-breaking article in 1952 by Weston Gui, the first psychoanalytic critic of the play.¹²

Consideration has to be given to the readership of the psychoanalytic journals discussed in this thesis. The majority are published for the psychoanalytic

¹⁰ Pearl King and Riccardo Steiner eds, *The Freud-Klein Controversies 1941-45* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 15.

¹¹ In Britain, for example, the war years found psychoanalysts in Britain arguing over the path that psychoanalysis should take, after the arrival in London of Sigmund and Anna Freud had disrupted particular developments stemming from the work of Melanie Klein that were distinct from Viennese analysis: see King and Steiner, *The Freud/Klein Controversies*.

¹² Gui, 'Bottom's dream', pp. 251-305. This is fully discussed in chapter 1.

profession, which may explain the paucity of references to wider literary criticism; and I shall suggest that the primary purpose of some of these articles is to discuss psychoanalytic ideas as illustrated by literature rather than the literature itself. Some of the articles appear in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, the oldest referred to in this thesis. It was first published in 1920, complementing the existing journals *Imago* and *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse*. It was the first psychoanalytic journal in English, because of ‘the remarkable increase of interest in Psycho-Analysis in America and England during the past few years’.¹³ Anticipating the content of the journal, its first editor indicated that it ‘will go beyond the clinical sphere and will embrace as well pure Psycho-Analysis and the other branches of applied Psycho-Analysis, e. g. its relation and application to literature, education, mythology, philology, sociology, anthropology, and so on’.¹⁴

The International Review of Psychoanalysis was first published in 1974 with the aim of including articles on psychoanalysis that were not seen by the *International Journal* as ‘pure’ psychoanalysis, including articles on applied psychoanalysis.¹⁵

The two journals combined in 1992, with the aim of including both types of content. However, I detect no essential difference in terms of ‘pure psychoanalysis’ or applied psychoanalysis between articles on the *Dream* in either journal before their merger. Contributors to both are mainly from the United Kingdom and America, so that in that sense too articles on the *Dream* are no different.

¹³ Sandor Ferenczi, ‘Open letter’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1920), p. 1.

¹⁴ ‘Editorial’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1920), p. 5.

¹⁵ J. Sandler, ‘Editorial’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1974), p. 1.

A number of other psychoanalytic journals are referred to in this thesis, where occasional articles on the *Dream* have appeared. In addition I have consulted sources not otherwise included on the database, which I accessed elsewhere. Some of these are referred to in psychoanalytic articles, while other sources have been psychoanalytic-literary critics who have published in other psychoanalytic journals or books. Not many literary critics are like Norman Holland, an American professor of English literature, who underwent a training analysis.¹⁶ But they are well versed in aspects of psychoanalytic theory, and use it extensively. Their contributions to literary criticism may be better known than many of the authors I discuss, but their closeness to psychoanalytic criticism merits their inclusion. While every effort has been made to check the background of the authors I reference, in one or two instances it has been impossible to determine whether an author is a member of a psychoanalytic society or is a psychoanalytic-literary critic.

There is a vast body of literary criticism on *Dream* – the Modern Language Association lists 1,057 articles on the play between 1901 and 2015 – and I refer throughout the thesis to key literary interpretations of the play in order to highlight the distinctiveness of contemporaneous clinical-psychoanalytical interpretations. I also refer to certain stage productions and films of the play as providing yet another perspective on how the play may variously be interpreted, whether by directors, actors, literary critics or psychoanalysts.¹⁷

¹⁶ A training analysis, a requirement in order to become a psychoanalyst, is distinct from a therapeutic analysis. Holland will not have undertaken the other requirements, such as supervised practice. Julia Kristeva is another who trained in analysis, although she is not relevant to the subject of this thesis.

¹⁷ Apart from the published literature that is examined for this thesis, a search was made of other academic theses that might cover a similar area. ETHOS (accessed 8 July 2015) lists only two theses referring to the *Dream* that might have been relevant (Emanuela Ponti, *Performing dreams in England and Spain, 1570-1670*. Ph.D thesis, University of Glasgow, 2010; Patricia O'Boyle, *Staging imagination: transformations of Shakespeare in Wordsworth and Coleridge*, Ph.D thesis, Durham

In summary, there is a good amount of material with which to examine how Shakespeare's play has been both interpreted and used in psychoanalytic literature, much of which has been ignored in literary criticism. I show how both psychoanalysts and literary critics using psychoanalytic concepts make a distinctive, convincing and in many instances unique contribution to a deeper appreciation of the play.

Psychoanalysis and literary criticism

The interest in the application of psychoanalysis to literature has been present from Freud onwards. The relationship between psychoanalysis and literary criticism proceeded on parallel lines for a number of years, with early Freudian criticism being much of the same character as the literary criticism seen in A. C. Bradley and others of that era.¹⁸ Philip Armstrong comments: 'For Freud as for Bradley, the literary hero's character constitutes that necessary mystery which offers psychoanalysis its privileged point of entry'.¹⁹ Since New Criticism, in a similar way to L. C. Knights's famous essay parodying the Bradleyian approach to Shakespeare's plays, the approach of psychoanalytic criticism has been questioned, particularly for treating fictional characters like real persons, and for its attempts to psychoanalyse authors from their works.²⁰ Yet the relationship between

University, 2008). Neither overlaps with my subject matter of my own thesis. Searching with the terms Shakespeare and psychoanalysis more generally three theses are listed, but none of them refer to the *Dream* (Vance Asadir, *The Shakespearean object: psychoanalysis, subjectivity and the gaze*, Ph.D thesis, University of Stirling, 2000; Nicholas Ray, *Tragedy and otherness: Sophocles, Shakespeare, psychoanalysis*, Ph.D thesis, University of Warwick, 2002; Christian Smith, *Shakespeare's influence on Marx, Freud and the Frankfurt school critical theorists*, Ph.D thesis, University of Warwick, 2012).

¹⁸ A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, second ed. (London: Macmillan, 1905).

¹⁹ Philip Armstrong, *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 23.

²⁰ L. C. Knights, 'How many children had Lady Macbeth?' (1933) In L. C. Knights, *'Hamlet' and Other Shakespearean Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). It is possible that his critique of the

psychoanalysis and literary criticism has continued. It has sometimes been questioned as in, for example, Shoshana Felman's on 'The question of reading'.²¹ The relationship has also been defended by various literary critics and psychoanalysts alike. They may acknowledge the weakness of character analysis, yet support an eclectic or plural approach to which psychoanalysis can make its own contribution.²²

Just as there have been different phases and emphases in literary criticism throughout the twentieth century, so psychoanalysis has focused on different aspects of personal development and personality structure.²³ Attempts have been made by literary critics, for example, by Elizabeth Wright, Norman Holland, Philip Armstrong and more recently by Caroline Brown, to identify the different phases of psychoanalytic literary criticism that reflect these developments in

type of criticism that examined the apparent inconsistencies in plot or characterisation in *Macbeth* was also provoked by Freud's speculation that childlessness was the cause of the Macbeths' scheming ('Some Character-types Met with in Psychoanalytic Work', 1916, *Standard Edition*, Volume XIV (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 319-33).

²¹ Shoshana Felman, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. The Question of Reading: Otherwise* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

²² For example: L. Edel, 'Literary criticism and psychoanalysis', *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1965), pp. 151-63; A. Roland, 'Toward a reorientation of psychoanalytic literary criticism', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 65 (1978), pp. 391-414; Francis Baudry, 'An essay on method in applied psychoanalysis', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 53 (1984), pp. 551-81; Valerie Sinason, 'Literary criticism and psychoanalysis: partners or millstones?' *Free Associations*, 1 (1986), pp. 51-63; E. J. Frattaroli, 'On the validity of treating Shakespeare's Characters as if they were real people', *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought*, 10 (1987), pp. 407-37; Norman Holland, 'Psychoanalysis and literature – past and present', *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 29 (1993), pp. 5-21; K. T. Souter, 'The products of the imagination: psychoanalytic theory and postmodern literary criticism', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 60 (2000), pp. 341-59; Esther Rashkin, 'Reading the mind, reading the text: reflective functioning, trauma literature and the task of the psychoanalytic critic', *American Imago* 68.1 (2011), pp. 37-48. Most of these authors are literary critics.

²³ Shifts in emphasis in literary criticism are discussed in Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989); Jonathan Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare* (London: Picador, 2008); Dorothea Kehler, 'A *Midsummer Night's Dream*: a Bibliographic Survey of the Criticism', in Dorothea Kehler ed., *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Critical Essays* (New York, Garland, 1998), pp. 3-67; Dorothea Kehler, 'The critical backstory and the state of the art', in Regina Buccola ed., *A Midsummer Night's Dream: a Critical Guide* (London: Continuum Books, 2010), pp. 15-43; Nicolas Tredell, *Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream – a Reader's guide to Essential Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

psychoanalysis.²⁴ In relation to the play, these phases have not, as in Freud's time, been in parallel with different types of literary criticism, even if these types of criticism can be identified in some applied psychoanalysis.

Before embarking on a close examination of psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream* I had thought that by reviewing the articles in chronological order I would find evidence of the different phases of psychoanalysis clinical theory of which I was aware from my clinical practice, or the different phases of psychoanalytic criticism identified by Wright and Holland in particular. While a chronological view of psychoanalytic criticism of the play shows a shift away from a literal application of Freudian ideas, it remains what I would call classical in nature, following what is called ego-psychology, an approach in practice and psychoanalytic criticism that is more concerned with the psychology of the ego than the original Freudian theory of the discharge of drives. There have been further clinical developments both in Britain and in America not always reflected in later applied psychoanalysis of the play. British developments, along the lines of Melanie Klein's work and object relations theory, are admittedly reflected in British psychoanalytic criticism, but are hardly apparent in American psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream*, despite acknowledgement of their relevance by leading American psychoanalytic clinicians.²⁵ New ideas in America in the form of self-psychology are similarly

²⁴ Elizabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism: a Reappraisal*, second ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); Norman Holland, 'Psychoanalysis and literature – past and present', pp. 5-21; Armstrong, *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis*; Carolyn Brown, *Shakespeare and Psychoanalytic Theory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015). Armstrong's critique is important, arguing as he does that psychoanalysis was partly shaped by Shakespeare, making a psychoanalytic reading of Shakespeare particularly pertinent. Brown's chronological survey of psychoanalytic contributions to Shakespearean studies is a useful digest, but she summarises rather than analyses the phases over the various decades in the last one hundred years. She wrongly describes Norman Holland as 'an early influential psychoanalyst' (p. 32), casting some doubt on her knowledge of the field.

²⁵ Freud's earliest model of inborn drives seeking discharge has been called id-psychology. Ego-psychology, a development of Freud's later ideas on the ego through his daughter Anna, was largely

scarcely apparent in psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream*. I will draw attention to the few examples there are of new ways of thinking about the characters in the play and their relationships to each other. It is interesting to note that there is more evidence amongst the psychoanalytic-literary critics for the work of later psychoanalytic theorists than in the psychoanalytic writers. This is not to devalue the more classical contributions, but to suggest that many of the authors have a rather blinkered approach to developments in psychoanalysis.

This raises a question about psychoanalytic interpretations of the *Dream* whether the authors who are psychoanalysts are seeking evidence for psychoanalytic theory; or using psychoanalytic theory to provide more plausible interpretations of the text; or even allowing the text to influence their psychoanalytic ideas. Shoshana Felman's problem with the phrase 'literature and psychoanalysis' is that it suggests that literature is the object which psychoanalysis interprets, with insufficient attention paid to how literature interprets or informs psychoanalysis. Her concern is legitimate and highlights one of the questions this thesis poses, which is how much, in Felman's words 'literature's function ... is to *serve* precisely the *desire* of psychoanalytic theory – its desire for recognition ... psychoanalysis, in literature, thus seems to seek above all its *own* satisfaction'.²⁶

fostered in American psychoanalysis, emphasising the central functions of the ego, such as defending against strong impulses and reality-testing. British object relations theory believes that drives cannot be separated from relationships – love and hate do not exist in isolation. Object relations theorists differ amongst themselves in the relative weight they attach to actual relationships and fantasised relationships, and in the structure of the personality, but on the whole the simple id, ego and super-ego structure is replaced by an interaction between different internalised 'objects' – dynamic mental representations of real and fantasised relationships. It was not really until the 1970s that object relations theory, initially forged in Britain in the 1930s and 1940s, was recognised in America as an important development of psychoanalysis, largely coinciding with home-grown challenges to classical Freudian psychoanalysis in the form of self-psychology. There is plenty of evidence of British ideas crossing the Atlantic from the 1970s onwards in clinical and theoretical discussions, but not in applied psychoanalysis.

²⁶ Felman, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, p. 6, original emphasis.

Structure of the thesis

Three major psychoanalytic papers, by American psychoanalysts, Weston Gui on Bottom's dream, Alexander Grinstein on the play within the play, and Melvin Goldstein on identity crises and the nightmare quality of the play form the basis for the first three chapters.²⁷ The fourth chapter on the Oedipus complex and loving relations discusses various psychoanalytic contributions, but goes beyond the Oedipus complex and notes the absence of psychoanalytic ideas such as narcissism and transference-love that can enhance appreciation of the relationships between the different sets of lovers.

Chapter 1, 'Interpreting dreams in the *Dream*', discusses the different ways in which psychoanalytic critics and psychoanalytic-literary critics have discussed interpretations of dreams that are referred to in the play. The chapter considers the first major analysis of the play by Weston Gui in 1952, concentrating upon Bottom's dream. In order to show his strict adherence to Freudian dream theory I summarise the principal features of Freud's writing on dreams and what Freud calls dream-work – how the dream itself works on day-residue. Covering in detail Gui's exhaustive treatment of the text, I demonstrate his over-ingenious application of classical Freudian theory. I sketch the background to Gui's contribution, including at the time he wrote the confidence of American psychoanalysis in the truth of Freudian theory. I discuss the contribution Gui makes to literary criticism.

Although Gui uses the text at many points in order to support his interpretations, the basic premise, that the middle three acts are all part of Bottom's dream, is one that

²⁷ W.A. Gui, 'Bottom's dream', *American Imago*, 9 (1952), pp. 251-305; A. Grinstein, 'The dramatic device: a play within a play', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4 (1956), pp. 49-52; M. Goldstein, 'Identity crises in a midsummer nightmare: comedy as terror in disguise' *Psychoanalytic Review*, 60 (1973), pp. 169-204.

stretches the text too far. Nevertheless in working upon a putative dream in the play Gui precedes by two decades key insights of literary-critical interpretations.

Following the analysis of Gui, the first chapter considers two psychoanalytic-literary critics, Mervyn Faber (1972) and Norman Holland (1979), who question whether psychoanalysis can interpret literary dreams. I preface their contributions by an examination of Freud's analysis of fictional dreams in a German novel, *Gradiva* (1907).²⁸ Faber and Holland show a different way of interpreting literary dreams, both focusing on Hermia's dream. The chapter concludes with further dream-analysis in psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary criticism; and with a brief comparison of this type of criticism with literary critics whose interest in dreams is more in how they were understood in the early modern period. I conclude that later psychoanalytic practice suggests that more attention in the interpretation of fictional dreams should be given to the manifest imagery of dreams than to attempt, like Gui, to uncover their latent meaning.

Chapter 2, 'A dream in a dream and the play in the play', takes dream analysis a stage further, starting from a hint of Freud's about the significance of a dream within a dream, and showing how his idea has been developed in later clinical papers. I suggest that, although there is as yet no evidence of it in psychoanalytic criticism, the ideas about the dream in the dream could have significance for further

²⁸ Faber, M. D., 'Hermia's dream: royal road to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Literature and Psychology*, 22 (1972), pp. 179-90; Norman Holland, 'Hermia's dream', *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 7 (1979), pp. 369-389; Freud, Sigmund, 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*', 1907, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume IX (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1959), pp. 1-96.

interpretation of the dreams in the *Dream*. I then draw attention to a footnote in Ernest Jones's book on *Hamlet* that a play within a play is as significant as the dream in a dream. I show how two early psychoanalytic critics viewed the play *Pyramus and Thisbe*, before the publication of the 1956 paper by Alexander Grinstein, which took Jones's idea and extended it. Grinstein included the artisans' play in the *Dream* as a further brief example of the parallel between the dream in a dream and the play in a play. While Grinstein's paper has received scant attention in psychoanalytic and literary criticism, I show how the play within the play has been understood since Grinstein both by psychoanalytic critics and psychoanalytic-literary critics; how it has been seen as significant; and how Grinstein's paper makes a particular contribution to the play as a whole. These various ways of demonstrating how *Pyramus and Thisbe* relates to the play as a whole are also found in literary criticism, and the chapter considers a few examples. With psychoanalytic criticism proposing particular significance for the play within the play, through the parallel of the dream within a dream, I conclude that this makes a valuable contribution to literary criticism. I propose that this understanding of the dream within the dream and the parallel concept of the play within the play add a new dimension to appreciation of the function *Pyramus and Thisbe* has within the whole play.

Chapter 3, 'The dark side of the *Dream*', is largely focused on an original contribution by Melvin Goldstein (1973) which reads the play as involving identity crises in all the main characters, and arguing that these crises have the nature of a nightmare – indeed that they demonstrate how the comedy disguises the psychological terror present in the play. I examine Goldstein's paper in three ways:

his original interpretation of identity crises in the main characters; the notion of comedy as a disguise for nightmare and terror; and his psychopathologising of the young lovers. I set Goldstein's paper in the context of a more pessimistic outlook at the time in the United States, and readings of a darker side to the play in both Jan Kott and in some literary criticism at that period. I ask how far Kott may have influenced Goldstein. I show how Goldstein's arguments could have been given even more weight by allusion to the work of Erik Erikson on identity; and on comedy as a disguise for nightmare by reference to Freud's ideas about humour. I question his use of serious mental diagnostic categories for what appear to me to be natural processes of accommodating to change. I observe that Goldstein's valuable paper has been seriously neglected in later criticism.

Supporting the Kott/Goldstein readings of a darker side to the play, I evidence some productions of the play that enact a similar interpretation, prior to and including Peter Brook's (and later stagings). I then show how three psychoanalytic-literary critics have considered a darker side to the play. I briefly discuss similar darker readings in literary critics writing about the same time as Goldstein. I conclude that these different examples of the same phenomenon – viewing the *Dream* as a nightmare – seem to have come to similar interpretations through a type of convergence, rather than through direct influences of one form of criticism or interpretation on another.

Chapter 4, 'Beyond the Oedipus complex', considers how psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary critics have interpreted the love themes and love relationships in the play. Since the Oedipus complex is so vital a part of

psychoanalytic theory it is not surprising that many interpretations of the play focus upon examples of it. However, I observe that the Oedipus complex was originally confined to a psychological conflict in childhood, concerning the child's desires towards mother and father; I compare the way it is used in interpretations of the play by psychoanalytic critics, which is more about rivalrous situations than about the actual oedipal issues of parent and child. I show how two psychoanalytic-literary critics, Allen Dunn (1988) and Thomas Frosch (2007), have been more creative in their use of the theory, interpreting the play as a whole as showing a regression to childhood and a working through of the Oedipus complex.²⁹ I then turn to other theories of love in psychoanalysis and observe how little they have been used to inform psychoanalytic criticism. There are a few examples identifying narcissistic love, but I suggest further ways in which the category of narcissism can be applied to the male characters. I also discuss the relevance of Freud's writing on transference-love, and draw together ideas about transference, idealisation and illusion to show that there is a sound psychoanalytic way of understanding the effects of the love-juice on Titania and the male lovers. I further question whether the Oedipus myth is the most applicable one for psychoanalysts in discussing the play; and I show how recent discussion of the Cupid and Psyche myth might be a more fruitful and relevant way of approaching the love relations in the play.

I conclude by returning to the three research questions posed above.

²⁹ Allen Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream wherein every mother's son rehearses his part: Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Shakespeare Studies*, 20 (1988), pp. 15-32; T. R. Frosch, 'The missing child in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *American Imago*, 64.4 (2007), pp. 485-512.

The chapters that follow therefore identify certain areas that reflect what psychoanalysts consider most significant about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: dreams, the play-within-a-play, the dark side of the play, oedipal relationships, narcissistic love and the illusion of love. From Gui's imaginative *tour-de-force* in 1952 through to the light that Ellen Pinsky's 2014 discussion of the transference throws on Oberon's love-juice, these sixty years of psychoanalytic criticism bring different perspectives to the play, make a distinctive contribution, and enhance appreciation of the *Dream*.

One: Interpreting dreams in the *Dream*

In this chapter I examine how Bottom's 'dream' and Hermia's dream have been interpreted, the first by a psychoanalytic critic, Weston Gui, the second by two psychoanalytic-literary critics, Mervyn Faber and Norman Holland. I also include, for comparison, shorter dream interpretations by other psychoanalysts, psychoanalytic-literary and literary critics. I will argue that in comparison with psychoanalytic-literary critics Gui's reading is constrained by its literal application of Freudian theory, but that it is an imaginative interpretation of the whole play developed from Bottom's supposed dream during the wearing of the ass's head.

As a necessary preliminary to examining the interpretation of these dreams, I set out Freud's own theories of dreams and dream work. The first major application of Freud's ideas to the *Dream* was published in 1952 in *American Imago* by a psychoanalyst, Weston Gui.¹ It is a very detailed examination of what Gui calls 'Bottom's dream', and is an example of a literal application of Freud's theory of dreams and dream-work. I summarise the five sections of Gui's paper, concluding with his use of the play to attempt an analysis of Shakespeare's childhood. This is almost the last example of the highly questionable psychoanalytic practice of analysing Shakespeare himself from his work. Following exposition of Gui's paper, in which I identify his adherence to concepts that Freud proposed in relation to dreams, I describe its reception by later psychoanalytic and literary critics. I examine the context in which Gui wrote in America in the 1950s – one of supreme confidence in psychoanalytic circles that Freud's clinical theories were transferable to the analysis of culture and the arts. I suggest that while Gui's literalism is

¹ W.A. Gui, 'Bottom's dream', *American Imago*, 9 (1952), pp. 251-305.

the most obvious way of categorising his paper, it can also be understood as a product of an American society that was imbued with a fascination for psychoanalysis.

Gui pays no attention to the question of whether fictional dreams in the play are open to the same kind of interpretation as a patient's dream. This question was addressed by Freud himself, and then subsequently by Mervyn Faber (1972) and Norman Holland (1979) in their interpretations of Hermia's dream.² Both of them are what I term psychoanalytic-literary critics. I therefore examine Freud's approach to fictional dreams in his essay on the novel *Gradiva*.³ I briefly draw attention to the reception of Norman Holland's 1965 paper on Romeo's dream, before taking in chronological order Faber's insistence that Hermia's dream must be interpreted in the light of an interpretation of the whole play; and Holland's use of Hermia's dream to illustrate three approaches to psychoanalytic criticism. I note the reception of these papers, in both psychoanalytic and literary criticism. I observe that both these critics contextualise Hermia's dream within the play itself, a quite different approach from Gui's, which is to see the whole play as an extension and a pre-cursor of Bottom's dream.

I conclude the chapter by comparing and contrasting the way dreams in the play are discussed, more briefly than by Gui, Faber and Holland, first by other psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary critics and then by two literary critics, Marjorie Garber (2013) and Peter Holland (1994).⁴ I reflect on the change in dream interpretation in American psychoanalytic practice and suggest that this explains the failure to pursue

² M. D. Faber, 'Hermia's dream: royal road to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Literature and Psychology*, 22 (1972), pp. 179-90; Norman Holland, 'Hermia's dream', *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 7 (1979), pp. 369-389.

³ Sigmund Freud, 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*', 1907, *Standard Edition*, Volume IX (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1959), pp. 1-96.

⁴ Marjorie Garber, *Dream in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis* (Yale University Press, new edition, 2013); Peter Holland, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

fictional dream analysis of the sort that Gui demonstrates. I suggest that the play's dreams, like actual dreams, must inevitably be open to various interpretations, given the impossibility of ever plumbing the meaning of such idiosyncratic creations. But I also assert that the placing of a dream in a work of fiction is intentional by the author, so that it is legitimate to attempt to understand what function a dream serves. Psychoanalysis has a contribution to make to that end, as long as the work in which the dream appears guides dream interpretation rather than, as in Gui, dream interpretation dictating the interpretation both of the work and of the psychopathology of the author.

Freud on dreams

Freud's major work 'Interpretation of Dreams' (1900) was published in a number of editions, with various additions, but his theories are best summarised in his 1916 'Introductory Lectures'.⁵ He makes plain that 'it is the dreamer himself who should tell us what his dream means', which is an immediate warning to anyone else trying to interpret a dream.⁶ Against the argument that dreamers often do not know what their dream means, Freud insists that they do, but that they cannot access that knowledge, unless they use a method of taking each element and each visualised symbol in a dream and asking what they might mean. I shall show that this is very close to what Gui does in his analysis of what Gui defines as Bottom's dream.

Dreams often contain pointers to recent events, feelings and thoughts mainly occurring a day or two before the dream – this is known as day-residue. Freud uses his free association method to enquire of the dreamer what an aspect of the dream brings to mind,

⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis', 1916, *Standard Edition*, Volume XV (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1963), pp. 1-240.

⁶ Freud, 'Introductory Lectures', p. 101.

however apparently irrelevant and unimportant: what does such-and-such (a word or an image) lead you to think of? And what does that lead to? And so on, until a meaning seems clear. Through free association the dreamer is led, as long as there is not too much resistance to the process, from what Freud calls the ‘manifest’, obvious images in the dream to underlying ‘latent’ thoughts. This method appears to explain certain assumptions made in some psychoanalytic criticism, as if the psychoanalytic critic can similarly follow his or her own thoughts as to what the text might symbolise and mean.

Dreams may or may not contain distortions – some dreams have an obvious explanation, especially when related to bodily needs. But there can be censorship through the manifest content changing what the ego perceives as objectionable thoughts and wishes present in the latent content. Through the study of symbols, patterns emerge which Freud suggests leads to the ability to translate them, even when the dreamer has nothing to say about a particular image in a dream. Although ‘the range of things given symbolic representation is not wide’, Freud writes that ‘the very great majority of symbols are sexual symbols’.⁷ This symbolism extends to ‘myths and fairy tales, by the people in their sayings and songs, by colloquial linguistic usage and by the poetic imagination’.⁸ The psychoanalytic critics appear to have licence to interpret symbols wherever they are apparent.

Freud describes what a very large number of symbols mean with what seems like certainty, yet at times the same symbol can stand for two opposite meanings: ‘a

⁷ Freud, ‘Introductory Lectures’, p. 153. He repeats such a claim on p. 166: ‘... in dreams symbols are used almost exclusively for the expression of sexual objects and relations.’ The psychoanalytic-literary critic Frankie Rubinstein makes an interesting observation, that although there is much use of language in Shakespeare that takes the form of a sexual pun, ‘this is not meant to suggest that Shakespeare realized symbolic dream language served to disguise repressed sexual material’ (‘Shakespeare’s dream-stuff: a forerunner of Freud’s “dream material”’, *American Imago*, 43 (1986), p. 350).

⁸ Freud, ‘Introductory Lectures’, p. 166.

predominantly male symbol may be used for female genitals or vice versa'.⁹ There is a similarity between the double meaning of images in dreams, and in some words that carry two or more meanings: the puns and double-entendres in early modern literature are similar examples. Here there seems to be a parallel between textual criticism and dream interpretation, which may therefore embolden the psychoanalytic critic to assign certain meanings. Contradictions in the meaning of symbols are explained in psychoanalysis by the unconscious not having to be logical. This seems at times to lead psychoanalytic criticism towards a slippery use of language, whereby a symbol is made to fit a theory. I suggest caution in interpreting such symbols. Some words do have quite contradictory meanings, and often it is only the context that makes their actual meaning clear. But the context of symbols that occur in dreams is not necessarily obvious, making interpretation of those symbols much more fluid.

There is one further aspect to dream interpretation that makes it even more complex: the theory of dream-work, which 'transforms the latent dream into the manifest one'.¹⁰ This is achieved through:

1. Condensation, whereby latent elements are combined and fused into one image in the manifest dream. Thus what the psychoanalytic critics define as one manifest element may stand for two or more different latent meanings; or one latent meaning may be seen in different manifest elements. Freud notes the possibility of over-interpretation.¹¹

⁹ Freud, 'Introductory Lectures', p. 153.

¹⁰ Freud, 'Introductory Lectures', p. 170.

¹¹ Freud, 'Introductory Lectures', p. 173.

2. Displacement, whereby an important element is replaced by something different, although the new element has something in common with its original, such as a homophone, or verbal ambiguity.
3. Transformations of thoughts into images, although thoughts can appear in the manifest dream as well.

For all his assertion that only the dreamer can tell what his or her dream means, Freud in the end displays a confidence in being able to assist the dreamer to understand it, through showing what the symbols mean and what dream-work has done to the original latent dream. It is this confident translation of symbolism, of dream-work, and of the manifest dream in order to uncover the latent content that I shall now show is so much in evidence in Gui's exhaustive interpretation of Bottom's dream.

Bottom's dream: Weston A. Gui

BOTTOM: ... Stolen hence, and left me asleep? – I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what it was. Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream (4.1.201-4).¹²

Weston Gui was apparently not concerned that he might be thought an ass, when he published his confident and (to the literary critic) provocative 18,500 word essay on 'Bottom's dream' in *American Imago* in 1952.¹³ Apart from his authorship of this one article Gui is a somewhat shadowy figure. He was a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst working in Chicago, who was shot dead in 1958 at the age of 37 by a mentally disturbed

¹² This and all quotations from the play are taken from the text in Peter Holland's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

¹³ Gui's paper is the longest of all the articles examined for this thesis. I stress its size as an indication of Gui's thorough exposition of the text.

veteran of the Korean War.¹⁴ He does not appear to have published any other papers in psychoanalytic journals, although he is listed with others as assisting the authors of a chapter on the neuroses in the annual *Progress in Neurology and Psychiatry*, published in 1954: the nature of that assistance is not made specific.¹⁵

Apart from the length of the paper, 'Bottom's dream' is also notable for being the first published attempt, whether by analysts or by psychoanalytic-literary critics, not to apply psychoanalysis just to Bottom's dream/vision time with Titania, but to the whole play. It is one of the most comprehensive papers concentrating upon the play in psychoanalytic journals, one in which Gui constantly refers to the text of the play to support his interpretation of Bottom's dream. However, there are many questionable glosses on the text, illustrating Gui's determination to analyse almost every word through the literal application of classical Freudian theories not just about dreams, but also about child development.

Gui develops his argument for the significance of the play, and of Bottom's dream within it, in five sections, which I summarise before analysing the evidence that Gui adduces in his 'attempt to discover by the means of Freudian psychoanalysis the meaning of this dream and, if possible, the elements in the libidinous life of its creator that gave it origin'.¹⁶

The first section starts with an assumption, for which there is only the slightest evidence in Bottom's waking speech, that since Bottom does not wish to interpret his dream, the

¹⁴ A report of this incident appears in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in February 1st 1958, pp. 1 and 10.

¹⁵ J. D. Masserman, G. Berkwits and A. Pauncz, 'The neuroses', in E. A. Spiegel ed., *Progress in Neurology and Psychiatry*, Volume IX, (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1964), pp. 507-24.

¹⁶ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 251.

dream must be very significant, containing latent thoughts that Bottom cannot permit to enter consciousness. Although other characters also dream, their dreams are either too short or lack rich material, so are not ‘true dream formations’.¹⁷ (It is surprising that he dismisses Hermia’s dream in this way.) Bottom is the only character who resists interpretation of his dream (although none of the characters, who may at some point be dreaming, make any attempt to understand their dream). Bottom’s objection to ‘dream analysis’ is so strenuous, Gui believes, that ‘we may expect to find in his dream the hidden nucleus of the material that Shakespeare, Bottom’s creator, worked into the *Midsummer-Night’s Dream* masterpiece of fantasy-comedy.’¹⁸ This is a particular feature of psychoanalytic theory, that the stronger the denial of a feeling or a thought, the more likelihood that it must be both significant and true. Whereas this assumption can be tested with a patient, there is no way it can be tested with a fictional character.

The reason for the huge significance of the dream for understanding Shakespeare himself lies for Gui in the reference to the dream having no bottom (‘It shall be called Bottom’s dream because it hath no bottom’, BOTTOM, 4.1.211-12). Gui is almost alone, certainly amongst psychoanalysts, in using the phrase in this way – all other references to Bottom’s dream are used to argue that dreams cannot be interpreted exhaustively.¹⁹

¹⁷ Gui, ‘Bottom’s dream’, p. 252.

¹⁸ Gui, ‘Bottom’s dream’, p. 253.

¹⁹ The psychoanalytic-literary critic Frankie Rubinstein observes that when Bottom says his dream has no bottom, this is Bottom speaking, not Shakespeare. Since Bottom is ‘an ass’, he could not expect to fathom his experience. The implication is that since it is Shakespeare who pens the dreams in his plays, they are potentially fathomable (‘Shakespeare’s dream-stuff’, p. 350). Against this apparent support for Gui’s interpretation is a range of psychoanalysts: Masud Khan prefaces an article with Bottom’s speech, going on to argue that there is a clear distinction between the experience of dreaming and the dream text as there is between Oedipus and Hamlet: Oedipus is depth itself, whereas Hamlet suggests a thousand questions (‘The changing use of dreams in psychoanalytic practice – in search of the dreaming experience’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 57 (1976), p. 325). B. Barnett, in a review of a recent psychoanalytic text on contemporary understanding of dreams, reflects on Bottom’s words, aligning them with a post-Freudian viewpoint that dreams are best understood if one forgets all theories about them and ceases to consider them as discrete phenomena (‘Review of *The Dream Discourse Today*, edited by Sara Flanders’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79 (1998) p. 623). G. O.

In the second section Gui proposes that Bottom's dream consists in part of a central core – that is the period of time when he wears the ass's head (3.1.108-90; 4.1.1-43). This is the 'dream-proper', enclosed within a wider dream, which covers Acts 2-4, and which 'we call extended dream material'.²⁰ The 'we' is deceptive since there is no other reference to this idea of 'extended dream material' anywhere else in Freud or in the psychoanalytic journals. The dream-proper, which starts when Bottom's braying brings about the meeting with Titania, 'proclaims the infant's exclusive right to the mother and extends his sense of omnipotence in every direction thru the magic of the four fairies assigned to attend him'.²¹ But this apparently straightforward explanation is not sufficient, Gui thinks, to explain Bottom's supposed resistance to interpreting it; therefore the 'extended dream material' must also be considered, if he is to arrive at a fuller interpretation.

In this extended dream material there is a second child in fairyland, the Indian boy; and Oberon in the extended dream material becomes a displacement figure for Bottom's jealousy of this child. But Oberon is also the jealous father, with Bottom as Titania's favoured child, and so there is an obvious Oedipus complex in the relationship between Bottom and her, with strong sexual elements. Literary critics would agree in part with

Gabbard, an American professor of psychiatry and psychoanalyst, refers in two different articles (not actually about the play) to the difficult task of deciphering symptoms, fantasies and behaviours. He uses Bottom's comment on his dream (4.1.212) to underline that 'there are many times that we do not get to the bottom of things ... in our analytic efforts' ('Overview and commentary', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 70 (2001), p. 295; "'Bound in a nutshell": thoughts on complexity, reductionism, and "infinite space"', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 88 (2007), p. 572). J. R. Lentzner and D. R. Ross refer to Bottom's speech, linking it to Freud's observation that every dream has a navel that makes it impossible to interpret fully ('The dreams that blister sleep: latent content and cinematic form in *Mulholland Drive*', *American Imago*, 62 (2005), p. 122n).

²⁰ This has a close similarity to the phenomenon of the dream within a dream, which was already part of psychoanalytic currency when Gui wrote, in both Freud and Ernest Jones, but which had not yet received the more sustained attention as it did four years later in Alexander Grinstein's 'The dramatic device: a play within a play', pp. 49-52 (see chapter 2).

²¹ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 255.

this, specifically the sexual symbolism of ‘So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle / Gently entwist; the female ivy so / Enrings the barked fingers of the elm’ (TITANIA, 4.1.41-3). The sexual relationship between Bottom and Titania is also clear in Brook’s 1970 production of the play, and Adrian Noble’s film.²² But since it is Oberon (through Puck) who initiates such a situation, simply to call this an oedipal situation is to miss the sadistic nature of Oberon’s trick; it needs a much more subtle psychoanalytic interpretation.

Yet another aspect of Oberon’s presence in the extended dream material is his speech about sitting on a promontory and hearing the mermaid sing, and then witnessing Cupid and his love-shaft (2.1. 149-68). Gui takes this to be a symbol of the baby Bottom sitting on his mother’s lap hearing her sing a lullaby, and this arousing his love-shaft. The light of the moon quenches the love-shaft (2.1.161-2), meaning that Titania (who Gui equates to Diana and the moon) is the mother who first stimulates Bottom but then frustrates his desire.²³ The arrow/love-shaft falls upon a ‘milk-white’ flower, symbolising the milk of the breast, and showing regression in the dream from the genital to the oral stage of sexuality.²⁴

Gui continues in this second section to unpack the text in his classically Freudian way, showing how the theme of Bottom’s oral regression is continued in regular references to food in 3.1 and 4.1. In 3.1.157-8 Titania instructs the fairies to bring delicious food to

²² See chapter 4.

²³ Gui, ‘Bottom’s dream’, p. 260. He is justified in equating Titania with Diana, citing as other critics do Ovidian references (e.g. Harold Brooks, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (London, Methuen, 1979), p. lix). Although there are references to Diana and the moon in the play, such as ‘silver bow’ (1.1.9), it is only Gui who appears to argue that since Diana is the goddess of the moon, therefore Titania=Diana=moon.

²⁴ A reference to Freud’s three stages in his theory of sexuality: oral, anal and phallic or genital (‘Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality’, 1905, *Standard Edition*, Volume VII (London Institute Psychoanalysis and the Hogarth Press, 1953), pp. 123-246).

Bottom, whereas in 4.1.31-3 and 4.1.36 Bottom requests certain foods such as a bottle of hay and dried peas, which may be appropriate to an ass, but also suggests that 'Bottom repeatedly asks for the lesser food and the lesser oral satisfaction when the greater is offered him'.²⁵ This idea of frustration at the breast is reinforced by Gui's reference to the one-breasted Hippolyta. Since Bottom is actually frustrated in his wish for oral satisfaction, he masochistically adds to that frustration by requesting 'lesser food', just as jealous Oberon, as a projected image of Bottom himself, masochistically places Bottom in Titania's arms. Gui's juxtaposition of these different images is so complex that even the contradictions of dream-work that Freud observes seem to have got out of hand.

In the third section of his interpretation Gui turns to the lovers, who share the night in the wood with Bottom, and are in Gui's opinion part of the extended dream material. The central argument in this section is that the violence in the relationships between the lovers, which 'is clearly linked up with a sexual theme, and ... leads us to see that this whole sequence of violent events is based on infantile notions of sexual intercourse gained from the watching of such an act'.²⁶ Phrases such as Puck's 'Up and down, up and down' (3.2.396), and Helen's 'O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!' (2.2.94) are to Gui more than simply references to sex and orgasm; this is primal scene material. 'Primal scene' refers in psychoanalysis to a young child's witnessing of parental intercourse, and how the child can be both excited and also fearful, sometimes misunderstanding what is taking place for aggression.

Notice the way Gui assumes these are references to sex and orgasm, at a point in the

²⁵ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 263.

²⁶ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 272.

supposed dream where Demetrius is still trying to escape from Helen. Undeterred – perhaps because dreams are in any case seldom logical – Gui continues throughout the lovers’ scenes in the wood to adduce further primal scene material. Since Bottom is in Gui’s imagination on stage asleep all this time Gui believes Bottom hears in his dream these primal scenes; hears, but does not allow himself to see: the night is moonless, and even the ghosts cannot see: ‘For fear lest day should look their shames upon /They wilfully exile themselves from light’ (PUCK, 3.2.385-6). Once every scene in Acts 2-4 is believed to be part of Bottom’s dream, every detail must carry the same significance: of a regression from frustrated genital desire to the promise of, but then the frustration of oral satisfaction, and to the witnessing of the primal scene.

Gui’s fourth section necessarily turns to Acts 1 and 5, concentrating on the play *Pyramus and Thisbe*, on the casting in Act 1.2 (and on the rehearsal in the wood), all scenes which are according to Gui full of sexual references and primal scene material. The sexual puns are indeed very clear in the artisans’ play, with references to ‘stones’, ‘hole’ and possibly ‘knit’.²⁷ Gui makes much of the names of the artisans and the roles they adopt, such as the re-casting of Snout from the father in the casting scene to the Wall in the actual playlet. His interpretation of *Pyramus and Thisbe* demonstrates all the oedipal, oral, genital, even anal material that Gui has found in such abundance in Acts 2 – 4. Gui also anticipates other psychoanalytic and literary critics who identify the parallels between *Pyramus and Thisbe* and the main play.²⁸

There is another aspect to this fourth section, and to Bottom’s performance in the playlet, that shows how much Gui has to fabricate in order to retain the logic of his interpretation

²⁷ See confirmation in Peter Holland, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p. 241, and many other critics.

²⁸ See chapter 2, where I return to Gui’s discussion of the play within the play.

of Bottom's dream. He has to address the question of why Bottom should have this dream, since dreams do not spring out of nowhere; they normally represent the working through in sleep (in order to preserve sleep) of 'day residue' –which through dreaming is processed to as to settle feelings which have been heightened and thoughts that still disturb from the day before. This 'day-residue' is also recognised by the psychoanalytic-critics Faber and Holland as significant in Hermia's dream.²⁹ Gui does not actually use the term – a weakness of his dream-interpretation – but it is his intention to explain why Bottom should be dreaming of oedipal, genital and oral situations. His explanation is that Theseus is

a symbolic father with Hippolyta as mother ... it is clear that the trio of the dream [Bottom, Oberon and Titania] represents the fulfillment of Bottom's wishes that rise out of the unsatisfactory relations of the problematic trio of real-life. Theseus and Hippolyta are the powerful parents with which Bottom has difficulty in coping, and Oberon and Titania are the dream-complements to this pair.³⁰

Here Gui enters the realm of his own fantasy, even omitting the vital qualification 'symbolic' when he later describes Theseus as Bottom's 'real-life father, who is not only possessive of the mother but executively strict in legal matters'.³¹ The purpose of the playlet, which Gui sees as being turned into a farce by Bottom (presumably to try and humour Theseus), is to show Theseus that Bottom has renounced his oedipal wishes. In response to Bottom's performance and Bottom's interaction with him Theseus temporarily changes to become a gentle and affectionate father, although even what the reader has been assuming are 'real-life' scenes rather than Bottom's dream seem to be

²⁹ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 181; N. N. Holland, 'Hermia's dream', pp. 372-3.

³⁰ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 284.

³¹ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 286.

infused with fantasy: Gui thinks that this change in Theseus is a projection of Bottom's wish to have tempered his father's authoritarian character. But, having led his reader to think that Bottom's oedipal issue has been resolved, Gui's comments at the end of the section indicate that 'Bottom is left ... with his Oedipal problem unresolved'; and that Bottom returns to his dream as the fairies appear.³² This is one of the weakest parts of Gui's article. It suggests an ambivalence that I note in some other psychoanalytic criticism of the play as to whether there can be total resolution of the Oedipus complex.

Yet the weakest part of all is still to come. Gui has analysed the whole play and in the final fifth section he reaches his conclusion. The play reveals 'the passing of a midsummer-night in the experience of a child'.³³ But not any child, since 'the child is not Bottom but Shakespeare himself and the dream with which we have dealt is Shakespeare's. Bottom's dream is merely the condensation point for Shakespeare's own *Midsummer-Night's Dream* fantasy'.³⁴ This fantasy is not the dramatist's creative imagination, but a re-working of Shakespeare's sibling rivalry that Gui believes must have been present when his young brother Gilbert was born.

... there is no other play that can rival *Midsummer-Night's Dream* in the accuracy and completeness with which it displays the impulses and struggles buried in the depths of the poet's unconscious, acted out as it is for us by the loveable infant-adult, Bottom ...

Bottom truly represents the workings of Shakespeare's unconscious.³⁵

Gui believes that for this reason the *Dream* is the most important play Shakespeare wrote.

Gui refers to Shakespeare's son Hamnet in the same context, and cites examples in other

³² Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 290.

³³ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 294.

³⁴ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 295.

³⁵ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 304.

plays in the canon that portray sibling rivalry, but surprisingly does not include the rivalry between Lysander and Demetrius in this connection. So Shakespeare's father becomes Theseus in his creation; the mechanicals' play is a primal scene, where the Wall and the Lion are seen as symbols of the father Theseus, the stern civic ruler who comes between Shakespeare and his mother.³⁶ The play within the play, Gui writes, is a parody of an earlier play, a denial by Shakespeare of 'the feeling within himself that had brought *Romeo and Juliet* into existence' – i.e. the theme of forbidden love.³⁷

Gui's exhaustive as well as somewhat intellectually exhausting exposition of the play concludes with a move from formalism to a type of historicism in an attempt to locate the writing of the play within an occasion that then provides another example for Gui of an oedipal situation in which Shakespeare supposedly found himself. While he follows several other critics in stating the occasion for which the play was written was the celebration of the wedding between Thomas Berkeley and Elizabeth Carey, Gui reveals 'the curious fact' that Elizabeth Carey, the year before her marriage, had been engaged to William Lord Herbert, 'the adolescent youth to whom Shakespeare in the years immediately following 1595 wrote his famous homosexual sonnet sequence'.³⁸ Gui builds on his assumption of the identity of the young man in the sonnets and believes he has discovered the key that uncovers Shakespeare's 'personality trends' that are seen in the play.

³⁶ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 297.

³⁷ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 298. It is not unusual to find the mechanicals' play described as a parody in literary criticism, starting with von Schlegel in 1815, who sees *Pyramus and Thisbe* as 'a most amusing parody' of the earlier more serious scenes in the wood (J. M. Kennedy and R. M. Kennedy eds, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), p. 83). In Celestino Coronado's TV movie (1985) of the play, *Pyramus and Thisbe* is replaced by a burlesque *Romeo and Juliet* on stilts. It is also full of sexual ambiguity, to a far greater extent than even Gui or any other psychoanalytic critic would suggest.

³⁸ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', pp. 301-2. Peter Holland says that this is the most popular wedding occasion for the play out of those variously proposed, although unlike Gui, Holland is himself not anxious to locate the play in that way (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 112).

That William Herbert was rejected, Gui asserts, ‘would have been felt very personally by Shakespeare since the sonnets reveal that the poet had identified himself very completely with the young man’, and would have ‘stirred up the central conflict in orality’ (though it is not clear why ‘orality’), as well as the rivalry between Shakespeare and Herbert over their (assumed) feelings for the prospective mother-in-law.³⁹ Gui concludes: ‘Thus, in the way that the content of *Midsummer-Night's Dream* derives logically from the immediate situation in Shakespeare’s life ... all of the material in the dream arises from unconscious complexes’.⁴⁰

Gui’s analytic method

Within the overall interpretation that Gui gives to the play, all of which flows from the theory that Bottom’s dream is central to it, Gui employs all the devices that Freud has set out in his interpretation of dreams. But he does this without the thoughts which are triggered in a patient when asked to ‘free associate’, without any information about the previous day or earlier events that may have given rise to the dream’s content, and without the brake of disagreement or denial which a patient can apply to an analyst’s interpretation. He is intent on unmasking the latent content, unlike later critics who tend to stay with the more obvious (manifest) imagery of the dream.⁴¹

The dream must be sexual – which of course it is on a manifest level – but everything else in the play must be interpreted in the light of what becomes an *idée fixe*. The symbolism, imagery and metaphor all inevitably connote for Gui a sexual meaning, although the term

³⁹ Gui, ‘Bottom’s dream’, p. 302.

⁴⁰ Gui, ‘Bottom’s dream’, p. 302.

⁴¹ See Thelma Greenfield’s well-argued criticism of the search for latent meaning of the dreams in the play, when the obvious meaning as well as the experience of dreaming are sufficient (‘Our nightly madness: Shakespeare’s *Dream* with *The Interpretation of Dreams*’, in Dorothea Kehler ed. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream: Critical Essays* (New York, Garland, 1998), pp. 331-44).

sexual is used in the sense of Freud's terminology that includes oral, anal, genital and phallic sexuality. Although I argue that Gui over-interprets, it is important to recognise that he does include all three of Freud's stages of infant sexuality, or what is called the 'pre-oedipal' period. He is nothing but thorough.

In some instances Gui's interpretations are not unreasonable: for example the name Snout may have phallic significance, just as the stones of Wall are recognised by literary critics as an Elizabethan pun also meaning testicles.⁴² But there are no such grounds for presuming Snout's occupation as a tinker carries a sexual meaning.⁴³ Similarly Flute's name becomes a means by which Gui interprets Bottom rejecting the role of Thisbe (which Flute is to play) because of the suggestion of fellatio, on the grounds that the modern slang term 'skin-flute' means 'penis', and bellows involve 'blowing'.⁴⁴ Starveling is to play mother, and the name leads Gui to the notion that he represents lack of oral satisfaction. Snug is a joiner, representing sexual union. Once the premise is that everything in Acts 2-4 is a dream, and that everything in a dream must have a sexual reference then Gui is unstoppable. The same caution is necessary about Gui's interpretation of what he takes to be images of oral sexuality: equation of the milk-white flower as representing the milk of the breast, rather than a metaphor for a shade of white; or Hippolyta the Amazonian woman signifying the absent, frustrating, breast.

True to the principle of condensation in Freud's exposition of dream-work, the same word

⁴² Jan Lawson Hinely acknowledges Gui's influence in her exposition of Tom Snout's name and the 'hodgepodge of vaginal, phallic and anal allusions' related to Wall ('Expounding the dream: shaping fantasies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', in M. Charney and J. Reppen eds, *Psychoanalytic Approaches to Literature and Film* (Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987), pp. 128-9). In turn James Calderwood cites the bawdy associations to Wall, including in his quotation a reference to Gui (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p. 127).

⁴³ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 281.

⁴⁴ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 283.

may symbolise quite distinct meanings. This is of course not unfamiliar in the English language, but Gui sees condensation where it may not exist. When linking the play to Shakespeare's infancy, Gui uses as evidence that the wood in the play means 'mother' the fact that Shakespeare's mother, an Arden, was related by ancestral right to the wooded areas north of Stratford.⁴⁵ Elsewhere 'wood' stands for 'the female genital area'.⁴⁶ Here Gui draws upon the type of interpretation of symbols common in Freudian psychoanalysis, as if there must be an identifiable and singular equivalence, as in Freud's footnote: 'wood, as is well known, is frequently a female or maternal symbol'. But Freud refers here to the substance 'wood' rather than 'woodland' – there is no other reference to woodland being such a symbol in psychoanalytic literature.⁴⁷ Ironically this kind of interpretation is reminiscent of the criticism of standard dream symbols that Freud makes about the dream-books of his time, but which is ignored by those analysts (including Freud) who harden symbols into generic meanings that must therefore apply universally. Contrast another psychoanalyst, R. A. Ravich, who interprets the 'wood' in the *Dream* in line with Elizabethan symbolism for madness, wood meaning 'mad' in early modern English.⁴⁸ There are few signs that Gui has checked out how the words and images he interprets might have been understood by Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

He does acknowledge that the moon in the *Dream* has been variously interpreted, and he lists the many uses of the moon images in the play.⁴⁹ But somewhat dismissively he states that in none of them 'is to be found the symbolic meaning we seek; these various

⁴⁵ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 298.

⁴⁶ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 260.

⁴⁷ Sigmund Freud, 'The occurrence in dreams of material from fairy tales', 1913, *Standard Edition*, Volume XII (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1958), p. 282. It is clear that in interpreting symbols analysts such as Gui often make bold statements, that, for example, moon and Moonshine stand for mother's breast.

⁴⁸ R. A. Ravich, 'A psychoanalytic study of Shakespeare's early plays', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 33 (1964), pp. 405).

⁴⁹ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 259.

associations have in fact been derived mostly from its basic unconscious meaning, that of the desirable but chaste and unattainable mother as lover'.⁵⁰ However, introducing as he does in this context the equation of moon with Diana and Diana with Titania, does indicate that he himself has consulted Ovid, crucial to any commentary on the play, given the importance to Shakespeare of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.⁵¹

Another example of dream-work, which is copiously employed by Gui, is displacement, whereby Oberon, jealous of Titania's hold on the Indian boy, represents Bottom's supposed wish to get rid of the boy, which in turn is a displacement of the infant Shakespeare's supposed jealousy of his baby brother Gilbert.⁵² Notice here that Gui does not consider the surface meaning of the text, that Oberon wants the child for himself. Oberon is to Gui also the father figure who is angry that Bottom is so close to mother Titania; and the homosexual father who allows Bottom to become intimate with her. Or, in yet another example, Oberon's pre-occupation with the Indian boy leaves 'Bottom free to indulge his wish for possession of the mother without fear of the father's interference'.⁵³ Oberon becomes both a displacement figure, and an example of condensation as a figure representing many different facets of Bottom's dream.

Gui employs a type of free-association. Psychoanalytic criticism illustrates this type of 'free association' nowhere more profusely in relation to the *Dream* than in Gui. For example, beginning with a reference to Titania as Bottom's dream mother, Gui moves through

⁵⁰ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 260.

⁵¹ Gui includes Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in the Loeb Classical Library edition of 1916, in his bibliography. See also Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

⁵² Although this interpretation of Oberon as a figure in Bottom's dream may seem strange, when in 1967 Cyril Ritchard directed the play in Stratford, Connecticut as a 'charming fairy tale', he himself played the parts of Bottom and Oberon for 'the fun of it' (Allan Lewis, 'A *Midsummer Night's Dream* – fairy fantasy or erotic nightmare', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 21 (1969), pp. 251-8).

⁵³ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 256.

references to the moon and Diana to Hippolytus's desire for Diana, when Hippolytus is forbidden a sexual relationship with her and is unable to find sexual satisfaction elsewhere. The Greek for 'horse' appears in Hippolytus's name and Bottom is transformed into an ass. This underlines Bottom's frustrated desire, which is like that experienced by Hippolytus.⁵⁴ This is a very neat sequence, and has its own fascination, but it is difficult not to think that these associations are all Gui's invention. Gui does not take the opportunity to relate Hippolyta and Theseus to Hippolytus as their son, which might have added some textual strength to his argument. Contrast the psychoanalytic-critic Thomas Frosch who develops Oberon's blessing of the couples with children to include reference to Hippolytus as the wayward son of Theseus and Hippolyta.⁵⁵

Gui can at times demonstrate a curious logic in the way he uses certain images. The milk-white flower is turned purple by Cupid's bolt: 'Before milk-white; now, purple with love's wound' (OBERON, 2.1.167). Gui understands the milk-white flower to be an image of the breast in Bottom's extended dreamed material; yet 'Dian's bud' (OBERON, 4.1.72), the antidote to the love-juice, is also Titania's nipple: both therefore stand for the breast. Yet the flower applied to the eyes has been turned purple by Cupid's bolt, and purple is seen as representing 'maturity and the "out-of-date" aspect of orally bound libido'.⁵⁶ As I attempt to follow this imagery, the love-juice which apparently represents maturity is applied to the eyes of lovers, whose consequent behaviour is far from mature; and Dian's bud, the antidote, represents the breast – or even regression to the breast. Although dreams themselves are not logical, any interpretation of them should be. This is a very confusing use of symbolism.

⁵⁴ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 261.

⁵⁵ T. R. Frosch, 'The missing child in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *American Imago*, 64.4 (2007), pp. 503-4.

⁵⁶ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 263.

In respect of the same passage, Gui also makes claims that are wrong, in order to support his psychological interpretation. The flower 'love-in-idleness' (OBERON, 2.1.168) is, according to Gui, the narcissus, and this therefore neatly links with the primary narcissism of the infant at the breast. Other commentators generally agree that it is the wild pansy or hearts-ease.⁵⁷

Gui's inventiveness goes too far when he moves from the text to the playwright, and concludes that the play represents the working out of Shakespeare's jealousy, with the birth of his baby brother, and his own deprivation of his mother's breast. This is not the first but it is almost the last example of the play being used by a psychoanalytic critic for an analysis of an aspect of Shakespeare's psychopathology; but even then Gui goes far beyond what these others briefly alluded to.⁵⁸ Gui's only evidence for Shakespeare's jealousy is adduced from a text that he uniquely interprets in its entirety as Bottom's dream. There was no historical evidence available to Gui. He assumes that rivalry in children, particularly of the older child

⁵⁷ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 261. Peter Holland is one of those who identify the flower as the pansy or hearts-ease. He observes that the purple of the flower is the colour of blood, and that Pyramus's blood in Ovid's tale turns the mulberry purple. If it is St John's wort that is alluded to as 'Dian's bud', its juice is purple, not white as might be expected from Titania's nipple.

⁵⁸ Frederic Farnell one of the founders of the New York Psychoanalytic Society, speculated in 1920 that Shakespeare's 'sexual character' can be seen, together with veiled references to his marriage, when he 'evolves his ideal woman, and in his creative fancies he brings forth "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona"' ('Erotism as portrayed in literature' *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1920), p. 408). Might this have been the article to which Freud referred in a letter to Jones? 'There is another article by Farnell, which struck me as quite worthless ... Could you not wipe it out without any remorse?' ('Letter from Sigmund Freud to Ernest Jones, April 12, 1921', in R. A. Paskauskas, and R. Steiner, *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones 1908-1939* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993) p. 419). Mark Kanzer, an American psychoanalyst and a prolific contributor to psychoanalytic literature, cites the *Dream* in 1951 in examining Shakespeare's changing attitudes to women. It is an example of the period in which Shakespeare demonstrates his 'optimistic earlier years, where the woman is a glowing constant beacon of fidelity, in contrast to the hero, who is often weak and vacillating. The heroine frequently has to take the initiative to straighten out their tangled affairs' ('The central theme in Shakespeare's works', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 38 (1951), p. 2). The only psychoanalyst after Gui who attempts to illustrate an argument about Shakespeare from the *Dream* is Alexander Wolf in 1980. He includes Shakespeare and the *Dream* in an article on 'Diegophrenia and genius'. Like Gui, but apparently not knowing of Gui's article, Wolf quotes two lines from the *Dream* to indicate that Shakespeare associates food with betrayal or death, 'We must starve our sight/From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight' (1.1.222-3). That Shakespeare does so shows he had difficulties at his psychotic mother's breast ('Diegophrenia and genius', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 40 (1980), p. 214).

dislodged in mother's attention by a new sibling, is endemic. Psychoanalysis has a tendency to generalise from the particular to the universal.

Yet Freud was always cautious in this respect. In everything Freud wrote he only once attempted a link to Shakespeare's life in the comments about the plays. Even that reference starts by referring to another's theory that the writing of *Hamlet* might have been linked to the death of Shakespeare's father – and Freud appears to add, to the death of his son Hamnet. There is at least some allusion to historical facts, and this linkage has been apparent in some recent Shakespeare criticism.⁵⁹ There is nothing particularly startling in such a suggestion. Freud's other references to Shakespeare are mainly to do with his approval of Looney's theory of the Earl of Oxford's authorship of the plays and poetry, although he did attempt an analysis of Leonardo da Vinci on the basis of questionable evidence.⁶⁰ Yet Freud did not say anything about Michelangelo's personality in his study of the statue of Moses.⁶¹

Literary critics, particularly after the advent of New Criticism, have questioned the legitimacy of two features of psychoanalytic criticism, the attempt to psychoanalyse the writer and the psychoanalysis of fictional characters. Unlike Gui, other psychoanalytic critics of the *Dream* have not usually wanted to discuss Shakespeare's psychopathology. They have, however, as is seen in this thesis, continued to regard the analysis of fictional character as a legitimate enterprise.

Gui's concentration upon psychoanalysing the latent thoughts and feelings in Bottom's

⁵⁹ Freud, 'The Interpretation of Dreams', pp. 265-6. For recent criticism on the subject see Stephen Greenblatt, 'The death of Hamnet and the making of Hamlet', *New York Review of Books*, October 21, 2004.

⁶⁰ Sigmund Freud, 'Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood', 1910, *Standard Edition*, Volume XI (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1957), pp. 57-138.

⁶¹ Sigmund Freud, 'The Moses of Michelangelo', 1914, *Standard Edition*, Volume XIII (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955).

dream means that he does not, like many of the later psychoanalytic critics, say anything at all about the psychology of the other characters. They represent characters in Bottom's dream. They are mental representations arising in his unconscious from anticipating the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta (and in Bottom's fantasy their wedding night). This is a far more assured interpretation of the play than, for example, the more tentative argument put forward by Freud for Hamlet's supposed hesitation in exacting revenge on Claudius, or than his suggestion that the force behind the Macbeths' actions was their childlessness.⁶² In relation to this latter speculation, Freud writes, 'What, however, these motives can have been which in so short a space of time could turn the hesitating, ambitious man into an unbridled tyrant, and his steely-hearted instigator into a sick woman gnawed by remorse, it is, in my view, impossible to guess'.⁶³ Gui makes no such qualifications, but confidently sets out his thesis of Bottom's feelings about Theseus's and Hippolyta's wedding night, for which there is no evidence in the text. This is in itself unusual for Gui, who for the most part attempts to support his dream interpretations with frequent citations. Despite his reference to Caroline Spurgeon, his assumption takes no notice of the type of criticism of Freud and A. C. Bradley seen in New Criticism.⁶⁴

Yet there is one aspect to the way Gui uses the other characters in the play as representations of Bottom's internal conflicts which could be of particular interest to the study of psychoanalytic criticism. Gui takes up an idea of Freud's without actually recognising that he does so: that a dream is peopled by representations of the dreamer in

⁶² Freud, 'Interpretation of dreams', pp. 264-5; 'Some Character-types Met with in Psychoanalytic Work', pp. 319-33.

⁶³ Freud, 'Some Character-types', p. 323.

⁶⁴ E.g. Knights, 'How many children had Lady Macbeth?' (1933). Gui includes Spurgeon in his bibliography though not in the main text. It was presumably her interest in imagery that attracted him to her work (Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935).

one form or another, the dream becoming itself a type of drama in which the residues of the previous day are worked through in order to preserve sleep. Freud's concept of this 'peopling' of the mind in sleep later develops, particularly in Britain from the 1930s onwards, into object relations theory: that at different levels of consciousness other than the obvious, our minds in a waking state are also peopled by internalised whole or part-representations of key figures who were particularly significant in infancy and childhood.⁶⁵ I suspect that Gui, as a member of what was in the 1940s and 1950s a rather closed psychoanalytic community in America, would not have known much about object relations theory. But however mistaken his overall interpretation is of the play, he illustrates, without knowing it, a feature of developing psychoanalytic theory.

Gui's confidence in psychoanalysis

At this distance Gui's ideas might suggest a kind of 'wild analysis', similar to that which infected the States in the 1920s, a phenomenon that was anticipated by Freud in his paper on the subject.⁶⁶ The confidence seen in papers written by Gui and others at the time may be allied to a more general confidence present in America in the 1950s: a nation that had won a major war and was then fighting communism in Korea and at home; in its development of the hydrogen bomb, in its economic boom, and in its flourishing optimism, far removed from European angst. Tempting though such an explanation might be there are two more obvious reasons for both the assurance with which Gui makes his interpretations, as well as

⁶⁵ David Hillman illustrates this idea well from *Richard II*: 'a generation of still-breeding thoughts ... [that] people this little world (5.5.9)' (*Marx and Freud*, p. 156).

⁶⁶ 'Psycho-analytic intervention, therefore, absolutely requires a fairly long period of contact with the patient. Attempts to 'rush' him at first consultation, by brusquely telling him the secrets which have been discovered by the physician, are technically objectionable' (Sigmund Freud, "'Wild' Analysis", 1910, *Standard Edition*, Volume XI, (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1957), p. 226). That psychoanalysis became the vogue in America is also amply described by Ronald Clark, who evidences 'the circulation of telling limericks, an indisputable sign of fame', such as 'A progressive young lady of Rheims / Had confessed some astonishing dreams / and was justly annoyed / When the great Doctor Freud / Said: "A surfeit of chocolate creams"' (R. Clark, *Freud: the Man and the Cause* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1980), p. 409).

his strict literal application of classical Freudian theory, reasons located in the status of psychoanalysis in mid-century in the United States, and in psychoanalytic training.

The status of psychoanalysis is seen in the way that wider society was ready to accept its claims without criticism. An illustration of this is a scrolling frame at the start of Hitchcock's 1945 film *Spellbound*:

Our story deals with psychoanalysis, the method by which modern science treats the emotional problems of the sane. The analyst seeks only to induce the patient to talk about his hidden problems to open locked doors of the mind. Once the complexes that have been disturbing the patient are uncovered and interpreted, the illness and confusion disappear ... and the devils of unreason are driven out of the human soul.⁶⁷

With the type of faith in the approach that Hitchcock's film portrays anything seemed possible. Yet the film's prologue is a simplistic explanation. In fact, an analyst does not seek only to get the patient to talk – interpretation plays a vital role, and in the first sixty or seventy years of the century faith in the mutative interpretation was high: interpretation was more important than what is now recognised as equally significant as an agent for change, the therapeutic relationship. Gui does not simply allow the play to talk; he has to control it through interpretation.

John Burnham's editorial introduction to essays on the rise and decline of psychoanalysis in America describes the impact of Freud's thinking in the United States as having 'far greater intellectual and social impact than it did elsewhere in the planet'.⁶⁸ This was partly inherited

⁶⁷ *Spellbound* (1945), directed by Alfred Hitchcock (Fremantle Media International DVD: VFC20263).

⁶⁸ J. Burnham, 'Introduction', In J. Burnham ed., *After Freud Left: a Century of Psychoanalysis in America*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 2.

from an ongoing enthusiasm for Freudian analysis that followed Freud's visit to America as early as 1909; and partly reinforced by the émigré analysts from Vienna and Berlin who escaped Nazi Germany in the 1930s and domiciled in America. The zenith of the prestige of psychoanalysis in America was the 1940s-1960s, the period in which Gui was writing.

Burnham comments: 'One need only review scholarly writing produced in the 1950s era to see the remarkable extent to which intellectuals in anthropology and kindred disciplines, not to mention literature and the arts, explicitly and repeatedly invoked psychoanalytic thinking in their work'.⁶⁹ This is astonishing given that in 1957 there were less than one thousand psychoanalysts in the United States.⁷⁰

Burnham acknowledges that in literary studies psychoanalysis was 'deeply influential', even as late as the 1990s. The continued relevance of psychoanalysis is seen in American television and film – many episodes of *Frasier* hang on the audience's knowledge of psychoanalysis, and series such as *The Sopranos* or films such as *Analyze This* and *Analyze That* feature a psychoanalyst as a central figure, let alone the many minor roles in American films depicting analysts and psychiatrists.

It would be unfair, and unreasonable, to associate 1950s applied psychoanalysis with the anti-intellectualism theory put forward by Richard Hofstadter.⁷¹ He argued this had come about through the democratisation of education and knowledge, combined with America's evangelical Protestant heritage. But there is certainly an evangelical zeal in Gui's paper, although he is not trying to convince a wider audience: he writes as a psychoanalyst for other psychoanalysts and, since his paper is published in *American Imago*, a journal which

⁶⁹ Burnham, 'Introduction', p. 5.

⁷⁰ Dorothy Ross, 'Freud, anxiety and the cold war', in J. Burnham ed., *After Freud Left*, p. 197.

⁷¹ R. Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage, 1962).

includes much writing on psychoanalysis and literature, I surmise also for literary critics interested in the application of psychoanalysis. Yet there does appear to be less critical distance in Gui and in other later psychoanalytic criticism than might be expected now, or even then was expected in literary criticism.

Psychoanalysts were convinced about theories of infantile sexuality and oedipal dynamics to the exclusion of other explanations of mental distress. That was also true of American society as in Martin Halliwell's terse observation, 'Sex was everywhere'.⁷² If that was so, Gui's delving beneath the sexual meanings already present in Shakespeare's text to find hidden proof of Freud's theories is not surprising. It is in this context that interpretations such as Gui's must be understood. What I detect changing in later psychoanalytic criticism is a shift away from the *literal* equation of a symbol or image with a psychoanalytic concept.

The second reason for Gui's confidence can be found in the way psychoanalysis had become a hegemony: those within the various psychoanalytic institutes who challenged it normally left to found their own groupings. Psychoanalytic training was and is a very long and expensive business, so that much is invested in its value. For a long time too it has stifled criticism in its training. A flavour of the intellectual climate even as late as the 1980's is seen in Otto Kernberg's criticism of psychoanalytic education:

A narrow intellectual frame determined by the locally prevalent views within the broad theoretical spectrum of psychoanalysis, intellectual toadyism or kowtowing to venerable fathers of the local group, petty "cross-sterilization", and discouragement of original thinking are painful indicators that not all is well with psychoanalytic

⁷² M. Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.42.

education.⁷³

It was not until the 1970s that new thinking was cautiously accepted within the parent organisation, and even then it appears from the evidence of psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream* that it has remained in America more allied to classical Freudian theory than to developments, such as self-psychology or intersubjectivity or even British object-relations.⁷⁴

Britain was affected slightly differently, since Ernest Jones's invitation to Melanie Klein to come to Britain in the late 1920s had already opened up challenges to Freud's theories. The controversies in Britain between Kleinians and the Freudians, each of whom held fast to their respective theories led to the development of a third group of more independent thinkers/practitioners in the 1940s onwards. Even then in the 1950s two of these three groups in the British Psychoanalytical Society adopted entrenched positions as they jostled for position. Charles Rycroft, a member of the independent group, records his perception: 'I entered the analytical movement without appreciating the passionate intensity, the absolute certainty, with which many analysts held their views. Too many did not have opinions that were open to discussion and possible modification, but instead had unalterable convictions'.⁷⁵ It is not surprising then that applied psychoanalytic criticism largely conformed to received wisdom.

⁷³ O. F. Kernberg, 'Institutional problems of psychoanalytic education', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 34 (1986), p. 806.

⁷⁴ See Elizabeth Lunbeck, 'Heinz Kohut's Americanisation of Freud', in J. Burnham ed., *After Freud Left*, pp. 209-31. See my Introduction for a brief description of these other psychoanalytic approaches. Intersubjectivity refers to the increasing recognition of the mutual influence of therapist and patient upon each other.

⁷⁵ C. Rycroft, 'Reminiscences of a survivor: psychoanalysis 1937-1993', *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 11 (1995), p. 454.

While therefore it is tempting to see Gui in isolation, as providing a subjective interpretation of Bottom's dream, he can better be understood as a member of an historically specific interpretative community.⁷⁶ Although this concept has been questioned in relation to literary criticism, the psychoanalytic institution is a good example of such a closed community, and of the way this could have affected psychoanalytic criticism of the type so vividly demonstrated by Weston Gui.

How Gui has been received

Despite Gui's paper providing a seductive, 'ingenious (if somewhat zany)' analysis, he has received scant attention from subsequent critics of the play, psychoanalytic or literary.⁷⁷ Of all the papers in psychoanalytic journals, only three (discussed elsewhere in this thesis) reveal awareness of Gui's paper. The first response was by Gerald Jacobson, also in *American Imago*, in 1962. Jacobson appears to approve of Gui's careful documentation in his thesis, to which Jacobson adds his own about the oedipal development of women in the play.⁷⁸ Melvin Goldstein (1973) includes Gui in two footnotes: in one he observes that it was unfortunate that a particular literary critic, in an article on Bottom and Titania, was not aware of Gui's article as an example of how their relationship had been dealt with at length; in another he includes Gui in a list of articles 'tangential' to the subject of transvestism in the play.⁷⁹ This dearth of reference by psychoanalytic critics is startling given the substantial contribution Gui has made to applied psychoanalysis of the play, and at a time when his interpretations would not necessarily be seen as tenuous. This suggests that either the

⁷⁶ Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980.

⁷⁷ The phrase is cited in Norman Holland's *Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 99.

⁷⁸ G. F. Jacobson, 'A note on Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream"', *American Imago*, 19 (1962), pp. 21-2. I discuss this short paper in relation to the theory of the different Oedipus complex in women in chapter 4.

⁷⁹ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 199 and p. 203. Goldstein's study of identity forms part of chapter 3.

majority of those who have written on the *Dream* since Gui do not find his paper either relevant or cogent; or more likely (and there is sufficient evidence of this that I observe in relation to other papers) that psychoanalytic critics do not on the whole research earlier references, making little, if any, reference to those who have already published either psychoanalytic or literary analyses of the play. This is one of the differences between psychoanalytic criticism and that by literary critics, whether or not they favour a psychoanalytic interpretation.

In addition to these two psychoanalysts the psychoanalytic-literary critic Thomas Frosch (2007) refers three times to aspects of Gui's interpretation.⁸⁰ Curiously, given the criticism that has been made of his thesis, Gui seems to find favour with at least two further psychoanalytic-literary critics for some of his interpretations of the symbolic significance of the mechanicals' names, and the symbolism of the Wall: Jan Lawson Hinely (1987) includes Gui in reference to the 'hodgepodge of vaginal, phallic, and anal' allusions in relation to Wall in the play within the play; James Calderwood (1992) cites Hinely's reference to Gui with approval⁸¹

Gui is received either less well or neutrally by literary and other critics. Political scientist Professor Morton Kaplan (1963) criticises both Gui's and Jacobson's articles as a 'ratiocinative exercise and sterile criticism', and as psychoanalytically unsound, which is an opinion Norman Holland largely agrees with.⁸² Yet Gui's analysis has all the hallmarks of Freud's interpretation of dreams – it depends which version of psychoanalysis Kaplan and

⁸⁰ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 487, p. 501 and p. 508. His article is examined as a whole in chapter 4.

⁸¹ Jan Lawson Hinely, 'Expounding the dream', p. 129; Calderwood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 127.

⁸² Morton Kaplan, 'The *American Imago* in retrospect: an article-review', *Literature and Psychology*, 13 (1963), pp. 112-16; cited by Norman Holland, *Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare*, p. 245.

Holland mean.⁸³ Judith and Richard Kennedy refer to Gui's essay in their digest of literary criticism of the play, noting that it has not had 'obvious influence', and suggesting that it is more extreme than other psychoanalytic commentaries.⁸⁴ Dorothea Kehler summarises Gui's study in one sentence but does not comment, and gives more space to Jacobson's later article, which was triggered by Gui.⁸⁵ Gui is also summarised in the annotated bibliography edited by D. A. Carroll and G. J. Williams.⁸⁶ Yet for all its faults, his paper deserves more recognition: for its originality as the first thorough application of psychoanalysis to the play; for attempting to encompass the play as a whole in identifying what he understands to be its central theme; and for some of the more useful observations he makes.

Gui's contribution to literary criticism

There is much to criticise, as I have already indicated, about Gui's interpretation of Bottom's dream as an expression of Shakespeare's own pathology. Even if the last section of his paper were to be discounted there must still be concern over his inclusion of Acts 2 and 3 as part of Bottom's dream, although his wish to find a unifying theme in the play is to his credit, even if the theme he identifies is mistaken. In extending the dream over these other scenes he pushes his Freudian interpretation to such limits as to lose the significance of the scenes where Bottom wears the ass's head. Yet it is a necessary consequence if he is to argue that the play is Shakespeare's way of working through his own childhood experience of sibling rivalry. In this objective Gui is over-ambitious, even if he is keen to find a device that runs through the whole play. Should the play have to contain a single unifying theme? Judith and Richard Kennedy observe

⁸³ Holland clearly approves of Gui moving beyond Freud to consider pre-oedipal elements in his interpretation.

⁸⁴ Kennedy and Kennedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 36.

⁸⁵ Kehler, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream: a bibliographic survey of the criticism', p. 39.

⁸⁶ D. A. Carroll and G. J. Williams, *A Midsummer Night's Dream: an Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1986).

that ‘the desire to find a central idea’ in the play ‘intensified in the mid-twentieth century’, and it appears that Gui’s article mirrors what the Kennedys detect occurring in literary criticism.⁸⁷ Historically this makes his paper of particular interest. And he is not the last to wish to find ‘a central idea’.

The Kennedys also point out that it was in mid-century that literary criticism began to give serious attention to the comedies. Gui similarly offers the first major psychoanalytic interpretation of the *Dream*. Whatever the article’s faults, the fact that his interpretations take a Shakespearean comedy seriously is innovative within psychoanalytic criticism. In claiming that it is the most significant of Shakespeare’s plays he again overstates his case, but he confirms from a psychoanalytic perspective that there is as much interest for the psychoanalytic critic in a fantasy comedy as there is in tragedy. Shakespeare’s tragedies were meat and drink to psychoanalysis.⁸⁸ Gui must be given credit for breaking with that traditional interest, being the first analyst to apply the psychoanalytic method to the *Dream*.⁸⁹

Without having to go as far as ascribing the substance of Bottom’s dream to Shakespeare’s own issues, it is an attractive if not quite accurate notion of Gui’s that Shakespeare put more of himself into Bottom than he does into other characters in the play. Bart van Es cites Lytton Strachey’s description of Bottom as ‘the first of

⁸⁷ Kennedy and Kennedy, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p. 33. The idea of a unifying theme is also endemic to New Criticism.

⁸⁸ Up to that point *Hamlet* had been of the greatest interest following Freud’s theory that it was his unresolved Oedipus complex that explained his delay in avenging his father – nine articles, together with some books, notably that by Ernest Jones; four articles on *Othello*; three articles on *Macbeth*; three on *King Lear*; and of other plays, three on *The Tempest*.

⁸⁹ Freud had written on *The Merchant of Venice* (‘The Theme of the Three Caskets,’ 1913, *Standard Edition*, Volume XII (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1958) pp. 289-302); and a number of papers had been published before Gui in which that play featured. Yet that play has a more serious theme, and of course centres on a Jew. Other comedies receive only brief mentions, except for one paper on *Measure for Measure*, another more serious play.

Shakespeare's master-pieces in characterisation'.⁹⁰ Harold Bloom describes Bottom as 'a triumphant early instance of Shakespeare's invention of the human'.⁹¹ R. A. Foakes (2003) also observes how Bottom is the only person in the play showing strong characterisation, 'who has in consequence received more critical attention than all the rest'.⁹² Bart van Es makes a convincing case for this being due to Shakespeare writing the part with Will Kemp in mind, fleshing out the character with the physical and personal characteristics of the man.⁹³ In productions it is often Bottom who steals the show, again suggesting that Shakespeare may have written this character particularly well. Gui suggests in his final sentence that 'when [Shakespeare] calls Bottom a weaver; Bottom is truly the bottom-depths of Shakespeare's own unconscious, the skillful weaver of all of Shakespeare's dreams'.⁹⁴ But this is not the same as asserting that Bottom represents the infant Shakespeare – rather that he represents the product of a maturing playwright. Furthermore he fails to recognise that the novelist and the playwright do not only draw upon themselves for their portrayal of character, but upon their observation of others as well, as van Es's discussion of Will Kemp illustrates.

It could be said that until the final section of his paper and his discussion of Shakespeare himself, Gui follows the New Critical dictum of adhering to the text of the play. That he does so is not out of deference to New Criticism: a psychoanalyst also pays close attention to every word of a reported dream in order to find its latent meaning. Nevertheless such detailed attention to the text as is seen in Gui is unusual in psychoanalytic criticism.⁹⁵ No-

⁹⁰ Bart van Es, *Shakespeare in Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 89.

⁹¹ Harold Bloom, *The Invention of the Human*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1989), p. 152.

⁹² R. A. Foakes, *William Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 30.

⁹³ Bart van Es, *Shakespeare in Company*, pp. 87-9.

⁹⁴ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 304.

⁹⁵ Goldstein ('Identity crises') similarly uses close analysis of the text, but is more convincing (see chapter 3).

one can doubt that he has carefully studied the text, and he is able to include many references to the text in an attempt to support his argument.

Such ‘image-based approaches’ were already present in G. Wilson Knight and Caroline Spurgeon when critics were turning from an interest in Shakespeare’s characters to a focus on poetic symbolism and imagery.⁹⁶ Gui appears to have modelled his approach to imagery on Spurgeon’s book, which is one of two texts by literary critics referred to in his bibliography.⁹⁷ But Spurgeon is never referenced in the paper itself, suggesting that Gui’s interpretations of symbolic language are all his own – or are drawn from what in practice had become a psychoanalytic dream-book. While Gui’s paper contains some credible interpretations of symbols and textual allusions, it is the way his interpretations are woven together that leads to huge assumptions. Spurgeon admitted that her book was a ‘bold attempt ... to set down some of [Shakespeare’s] characteristics’, the essence of which she describes as ‘sensitiveness, balance, courage, humour and wholesomeness’.⁹⁸ That may have encouraged Gui in his own bold hypothesis. Yet Spurgeon confines her boldness to what characterises Shakespeare’s as a writer. Her approach does not justify Gui making a specific use of Bottom’s dream to analyse Shakespeare’s supposed neurosis. Nevertheless, one must be careful not to dismiss all his interpretations of the different symbols. Many of his interpretations of sexual imagery are convincing and confirmed in other criticism, although his enthusiasm for sexual connotations can run away with him.⁹⁹ He also provides confirmation from a psychological stance of critical appreciation of metaphors and images,

⁹⁶ G. Wilson Knight, *The Shakespearean Tempest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 141-68, where there is extensive treatment of the imagery of the *Dream*. It is in that book that there is perhaps the first hint of the nightmare imagery of the play; Spurgeon, *Shakespeare’s Imagery*.

⁹⁷ The other entry in the bibliography is E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930). Gui has clearly consulted Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, which, with Frazer’s *Golden Bough*, is also listed in his bibliography.

⁹⁸ Spurgeon, *Shakespeare’s Imagery*, p. 202 and p. 206.

⁹⁹ For example, the sexual imagery in Titania’s lullaby, the profuse sexual imagery in relation to the Wall in Pyramus and Thisbe, the significance of Ovid and the equation of the moon and Diana.

illustrating the potentiality for drama to speak to different levels of awareness.

While it is tempting for the literary critic to assess Gui partly in the light of the New Criticism and New Historicism, this is to miss the point: Gui uses a psychoanalytic paradigm, and although literary critics might regard that paradigm as having limitations, from a psychoanalytic stance of its time his is a masterful piece of work. It is full of his own associations (as in free association) to the material, impressively weaving into the play an almost complete textbook of psychoanalytic theory. A psychoanalytic critic can be impressed by Gui moving beyond the standard oedipal interpretations so common to applied psychoanalysis and including as much reference to pre-oedipal phases in child development. Thus he identifies Bottom as the baby wanting to be nursed; and indeed in the dream Bottom is pampered by Titania as a mother figure. This wider range of interpretation provides possibility for the literary critic who may think that Freudian theory only focuses on the Oedipus complex. Gui also alludes in one interpretation to Bottom's animal nature. He does not make much of the last possibility, but he anticipates Kott and bestial interpretations.¹⁰⁰ However, Gui does not suggest a single over-arching set of interpretations beyond his assumption of the ubiquity of Bottom's dream material in the play: to him all the different levels of interpretation are valid.¹⁰¹ Gui's psychoanalytic interpretations suggest not just alternatives, but that all such meanings can be contained in the one text. In the same way, the various interpretations in literary critics of any element of the play provide a number of alternative theories for the reader to consider.

¹⁰⁰ For Kott's possible influence on dark interpretations of the play on see chapter 3 of the thesis.

¹⁰¹ The literary critic Douglas Freake also presents a multi-faceted interpretation of Bottom, 'A comic version of the Theseus myth', in D. Kehler ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 270. Bottom is seen as a 'divine child' as in the Jungian archetype, as a sexual object, and as a mythical half-animal figure, but Freake's conclusion is that he is more 'divine child than sexual object'. Freud's description of the unconscious sees it as containing contradictory ideas and conflicting emotions.

Despite my concerns about the central place Gui accords to Bottom's dream, and many of his interpretations of the elements he finds in it, I suggest that Gui makes an important contribution: his painstaking interpretation of Bottom's dream is, I suspect, unique to psychoanalysis and to literary criticism, even to the extent of calling it a dream rather than a vision or seeing it (as it is) the enactment of a fantastic idea. If he appears to force almost the whole play into being Bottom's dream, and at times to exaggerate the significance of some words and images, perhaps imagining, in Theseus's phrase, a bush to be a bear (5.1.22), he shows his reader the many possibilities within the play for understanding it on different levels. Whether or not his own associations to the text stand up to close examination, the obvious way in which he constantly looks for meaning in the text encourages his readers to allow such speculation in finding their own sense of the play's psychological relevance. He demonstrates the necessity of constant reference to the text, even if at times he finds meaning in certain passages that only make sense to another psychoanalyst, or to someone versed in Freud's theories in their purest form.

Against this positive appreciation, I detect a similar relationship between biblical criticism of Old and New Testaments on the one hand and fundamentalist exegesis on the other, as there seems to be between literary criticism and Gui's evangelical zeal to apply the gospel of Freud to the text. In all cases close attention is paid to the words and phrases, although in the case of biblical and literary criticism, it is always within the context of historical, linguistic, and contextual information. In the case of religious or psychoanalytic fundamentalism there is a guiding principle, which either takes no account of, or even dismisses the brake that contextual studies put upon interpretation, or even the amplification that contextual studies contribute to interpretation. The guiding principle of the fundamentalist is the infallibility of a particular dogma, a tendency to which psychoanalysis

has been prone. Literary critics, and literary critics who can include psychoanalytic thinking in their readings, can be as inventive in their interpretations of the text as Gui, but they do not rely on a dictum which must have been the back of Gui's mind, that psychoanalytic theory has the answer to everything.

It is significant that Gui, in common with many psychoanalytic critics of the *Dream*, does not discuss literary criticism of the play – it is as if his own discipline is all-sufficient and all-encompassing. He includes some references in his bibliography, but does not refer to them in the main text. Psychoanalytic concepts that had proved for one reason or another valuable in clinical work were assumed to be readily applicable to literary studies, without considering whether other approaches might be needed to inform psychoanalytic criticism.

Gui is not the only psychoanalytic critic of the play to show this conviction that I call literalism. But his interpretations provide a very good example of the literal. He is, as I have argued, a product of his time. Many later studies of the play by psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic-literary critics demonstrate a more measured approach. This is illustrated when Gui's approach to the interpretation of Bottom's dream is compared to the two psychoanalytic-literary critics, Mervyn Faber and Norman Holland, each of whom analyses Hermia's dream. Unlike Gui they consider a question that Gui presumably sees no reason to ask, which is whether it is legitimate to apply psychoanalytic dream interpretation to a fictional dream. It is a question that is particularly pertinent when reading Gui; and it is a question that Freud himself addressed when he wrote a psychoanalytic study of Jensen's *Gradiva*.

Can fictional dreams be psychoanalysed?

Freud commended caution when interpreting actual dreams. In his case studies and examples of dreams sometimes appear confident rather than cautious, such summaries came out of many hours spent on a single analysis. But when Freud raised the question of interpreting an invented dream in a footnote to a revised edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams* it is his confidence rather than caution that is clear: 'I found by chance in *Gradiva*, a story written by Wilhelm Jensen, a number of artificial dreams which were perfectly correctly constructed and could be interpreted just as though they had not been invented but had been dreamt by real people'.¹⁰² He went on to write a commentary on *Gradiva*, arguing that creative writers aim in their imagined dreams to depict the state of their character's mind.¹⁰³ Just as novelists can imagine a character's psychological responses, they can create a dream that illustrates that character's concerns or may point forward to later events. A dream therefore becomes an additional way of entering the fears and wishes of the fictional dreamer.

Although Freud's essay starts with the intention of interpreting some fictional dreams in the book, the first part of his monograph is a virtual re-telling in great detail of the whole novel. In the second part of his exegesis, he states that if he is to interpret dreams he should know as much as he can about the characters in the book – just as he would with a patient. As the reader proceeds, now immersed in Freud's interpretations, what is striking is that his ideas are those one might expect from a literary critic: for example, he draws attention to the links between the main character Norbert's dream of a young woman in Pompeii, a copy of a Roman relief of a young woman in his possession, to an occasion where he looks down a street and glimpses a woman who looks like the figure on the relief, and then to Norbert

¹⁰² Freud, 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 97n.

¹⁰³ Sigmund Freud, 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*', pp. 1-96.

visiting Pompeii and first glimpsing and then meeting a young woman who was once a childhood friend. Freud suggests that a caged bird that Norbert notices is a symbol of Norbert being ‘caged’ within his academic discipline and having no time for women. Freud reflects on the significance of asphodel as a flower signifying remembrance, as Norbert remembers his childhood with the young girl as she was then. He suggests the girl’s name, Zoe Bertgang, reflects in the first name the young woman bringing life to the young man in unlocking his romantic feelings; and that her surname echoes in German the Latin name *Gradiva* – she who steps along. This was the name that Norbert had given the young woman of his Roman relief and in his dream. Thus far Freud writes as an exemplary literary critic, although he then uses these associations to move into his theories of repression, fetishism, eroticism and above all of dream-interpretation. It is only there that the literary scholar may (or may not) part company with Freud’s commentary upon the text. Freud in his *Gradiva* commentary, and I suspect Gui in his interpretation of Bottom’s dream, both have a secondary purpose, to demonstrate the validity of psychoanalytic concepts, not only as critical tools, but as psychological truths *per se*.

As Freud studies the invented dream with the information that the author Jensen has given in his invented characters and his invented narrative, he imports his theories to suggest explanations for Norbert’s actions and motives. Why, for example, is he, a single-minded academic, only interested in his studies, and not in other people? However, much of Freud’s interpretation of the invented dream still comes directly from the material that the author has provided in his text.

This suggests that there are prescribed limits to how far an invented dream can be interpreted: interpretations must be linked to the surrounding text. A psychoanalytic

interpreter of the invented dream has therefore somewhat more restricted information than the psychoanalyst might have in the case of a patient's dream. In the latter instance interpretations have to depend not only on what the patient makes of the dream, but on how much the analyst knows of the day-residue, as well as of the perhaps consciously hidden fears and wishes of the patient; and how much of the actual and the imagined history of the patient has so far become known or is known. A novel often contains this type of information. There is however usually much less of this material available to the psychoanalytic literary critic of a play than a critic working on a novel. Conjecture plays a more significant role. Unless a dramatist provides a preface or notes on the way characters should be played, or includes soliloquies in which a character reveals his thoughts, far less can be reliably inferred than in a novel about a character's psychological state. Such soliloquies are brief in the *Dream*, and compared to *Hamlet* provide little clue to the feelings of those who speak them, other than a sense of mystification as to what is happening to them. It may be that the question of interpreting fictional dreams in plays needs particular attention over and above Freud's successful demonstration of interpreting dreams in *Gradiva*.

This question of interpreting fictional dreams was addressed in a paper on Romeo's dream by Norman Holland in 1963.¹⁰⁴ Holland was probably in analysis himself at the time, which may have made him more subject to the type of psychoanalytic mindset I have already described.¹⁰⁵ He summarises Freud's argument for the legitimacy of analysing fictional dreams, and is confident that an artificially constructed dream is open to analysis – as long

¹⁰⁴ Norman Holland, 'Romeo's dream and the paradox of literary realism', *Literature and Psychology*, 13 (1963), pp. 97-104.

¹⁰⁵ Holland writes in his *Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966) that he first wrote it in 1960, but that he embarked on a training analysis and re-wrote the book, which was first published in 1964 (p. vii). Since training analyses are long-winded affairs, I can presume he was in analysis at the time of writing 'Romeo's dream'.

as its background and context are known, and there is 'a timetable of the events which may appear in it as day-residue'.¹⁰⁶ He had previously argued in several papers that art should not be confused with life, and he does not explain what led to his change of mind. He concedes that it would normally be necessary to have the dreamer's associations, but he approves of what he calls Freud's support for putting 'our own associations' in place of the fictional dreamer's.¹⁰⁷

Responding to a presentation of Holland's paper at a meeting of the Literature and Psychology group in the Modern Language Association, James Hepburn comments that Holland's exploration of Romeo's dream is so thorough that it seems the dream actually does have a bottom; and since Freud had said that dreams have no bottom, then there must be a difference between a fictional dream and a real one. Hepburn suggests that it is possible for a psychoanalytic interpretation to be made of both an invented dream and the fiction in which it appears, but it should not be called, as Holland does, 'realistic'.¹⁰⁸ I conclude that Holland's judgment, which he rescinds in his later 1979 paper on Hermia's dream, must have been swayed by his experience of personal analysis.

Faber in his 1972 paper raises the same question of the justification for treating a literary dream as realistic, and accepts that 'dream interpretation [is] heavily dependent upon the dreamer's associations' to the dream's images, and that a fictional dreamer may not furnish any associations.¹⁰⁹ He is right to suggest that the function of a fictional dream may differ from the function of an actual dream. I support his argument that if Freud thought that it was

¹⁰⁶ Holland, 'Romeo's dream', p. 97.

¹⁰⁷ Holland, 'Romeo's dream', p. 98. He cites Freud's *Grävia*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁸ James Hepburn, 'A dream that hath no bottom', pp. 3-6, Minute of the 6th annual meeting of the Discussion Group General Topics 10 (Chicago, Illinois: Modern Language Association, 27 December 1963).

¹⁰⁹ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 179.

possible for analysts to put their associations tentatively in place of the fictional dreamer's a critic can also make associations, but that those associations 'must remember that anything does *not* go'.¹¹⁰ A psychoanalyst should monitor a patient's response to associations supplied by the analyst. There is little chance of this happening with the fictional dreamer – only the subsequent text can confirm or reject such associations.

A fictional dream appears in what Faber calls the 'organic universe' of the literary piece, and functions as 'an integral part of that universe', so associations must be confined 'to the limited and finite meanings which arise from the text of the work as a whole'.¹¹¹ This response may be 'genuine, but not necessarily correct' and 'may aid us ... in grasping the sort of response the text is capable of generating in those who come into contact with it'.¹¹² Criticism, as Faber sees it, enriches 'understanding of a work's interpretative potential through a responsible, thoroughgoing exploration of textual possibilities'.¹¹³

Hermia's Dream: Mervyn Faber (1972)

HERMIA (*waking*) Help me, Lysander, help me! Do thy best

To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!

Ay me, for pity. What a dream was here?

Lysander, look how I do quake with fear.

Methought a serpent ate my heart away.

And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.

Lysander—what removed?... (2.2.151-7)

¹¹⁰ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 18 (original emphasis).

¹¹¹ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 180.

¹¹² Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 179.

¹¹² Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 180.

¹¹³ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 180.

What is immediately noticeable in both Faber's and Holland's interpretations of Hermia's dream is that they wish to interpret it within the context of the play. Instead of, as in Gui, the dream dictating the meaning of the play, for them the play must dictate the meaning of the dream.

Mervyn Faber, one time professor of English language and literature at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, has been prolific in publishing on literature in *The Psychoanalytic Review* and other journals, and is author of several books, some of which focus on psychology and religion. His intention is 'to analyze Hermia's dream in such a way as to illuminate the total meaning of the comedy', which he believes 'will be to understand something about Shakespeare's depiction of mental processes'.¹¹⁴ The sub-title of his paper 'royal road to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' pays homage to Freud's description of dreams, as '*the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind*'.¹¹⁵ Unlike Gui he begins in accordance with Freud's methodology, by examining how the dream might have been influenced by 'day residue'. Gui's 'day residue', if it existed at all, was pure imagination: Faber uses the text to find what evidence there is of this residue. Hermia's dream follows Lysander's request to sleep closely together, so it is an erotic dream. Far from expressing an erotic wish that might have followed Lysander's bid for them to sleep close together (2.2.47-8), dream censorship has distorted the wish. Lysander's phallus has become the serpent, and is detached from the smiling Lysander – smiling as he would if he had had the opportunity to consummate the relationship. The serpent attacks Hermia's breast, a displacement of her genitals. It is aggressive, as intercourse in one sense is suggested to be. Despite this distortion and displacement, Hermia cannot continue sleeping,

¹¹⁴ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 180.

¹¹⁵ Freud, 'Interpretation of Dreams', p. 608 (original emphasis).

since the dream no longer guards her sleep.¹¹⁶

To a Freudian this is a convincing interpretation, although the literary critic may wonder why Hermia's breast has to stand for her genitals: that is an example of Freud's dream work in the form of displacement. My own view is that any wish for/fear of Lysander's intended foreplay would have been sufficient reason to dream of the serpent. I suggest the serpent, as in the story of Eve, stands for temptation as much as the phallus, and Faber perhaps agrees, since he includes another meaning, that the serpent stands for deception, alluding to the later scene where Hermia calls Demetrius, an adder with 'a doubler tongue' (3.2.72).¹¹⁷ This is a close reading of the text. What is also noticeable is that even if Faber seeks to discern the latent thought behind the manifest image (for example Lysander's smile is another example of displacement, that is of Hermia's smile at the thought of intimacy) what Faber does that Gui never does is to include a reference to the use of language in early modern literature. He observes how Lysander's 'fair prayer' (2.2.68) becomes distorted to 'cruel prey' (HERMIA, 2.2.155), which he suggests is an allusion to the courtly love tradition where 'fair' and 'cruel' were 'commonly linked opposites'. In declining Lysander's advances before they slept, Hermia was the 'cruel prey'.¹¹⁸

Faber is interested in an idea that originates with Freud, 'that anxiety, in dreams and elsewhere, places the subject in a position which obliges him to exercise *control*'.¹¹⁹ Thus Hermia in her dream struggles to control 'opposing tendencies within herself'; and the play 'is concerned in its very essence with the problem of mastering, of controlling, those archaic, uncivilized, ungoverned, inexplicable elements which are apt on occasion to break through

¹¹⁶ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 183.

¹¹⁷ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 185.

¹¹⁸ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 185.

¹¹⁹ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 187.

the “protective shield” of the ordered human personality’.¹²⁰

Faber observes the split between the ‘irrational, dangerous and primitive’, represented by the serpent in Hermia’s dream on the one side, and ‘the conscious, innocent, pacific side’, and draws a parallel between Hermia dreaming while she is asleep, and the lovers being asleep when the love-juice is applied.¹²¹ Like Gui, he observes that the love-juice is obtained from a flower which Cupid’s ‘love-shaft’ or ‘bolt’ has ‘invaded’ (OBERON, 2.1.159, and 2.1.165), but his interpretation is very different. Instead of the love-juice representing mother’s milk as in Gui, Faber contends that the dream ‘captures for us in miniature what Shakespeare attempts to express through his employment of the love-juice as the main vehicle for arousing the primitive, animal side of his central characters’.¹²² Again Faber looks for a wider context for the significance of the image. Shakespeare uses a ‘comic strategy’ to suggest that these two sides have nothing to do with one another. Faber imagines Shakespeare to be thinking that since ‘there is no way to explain man’s curious behavior from *within man*, let us place the cause of that behavior in the fairy realm’.¹²³ There is of course no evidence to suggest this is what Shakespeare was thinking: the point could have as well have been made that desire gives rise to conflict, with the prohibition of desire already obvious in Egeus’s attempt to control Hermia’s choice of lover.

Faber at times suggests a psychoanalytic interpretation of the dream that is unnecessary for his purpose of identifying the patriarchal order in the play. He employs Hermia’s reference to the serpent at her breast to suggest ‘a female version of the fantasy of *vagina dentata* (that the phallus will mutilate the woman’s genitals)’, which cannot be evidenced from the text.

¹²⁰ Faber, *Hermia’s dream*, p. 187 (original emphasis).

¹²¹ Faber, *‘Hermia’s dream’*, p. 186.

¹²² Faber, *‘Hermia’s dream’*, p. 186.

¹²³ Faber, *‘Hermia’s dream’*, p. 186.

More plausibly he suggests that the play 'is largely devoted to the problem of setting boundaries between male and female'.¹²⁴ The dream suggests this without the need to resort to *vagina dentata*. Identifying themes that were to receive later attention from literary criticism, such as in feminist criticism and queer theory, Faber refers to Hippolyta's submission to Theseus, and the struggle between Oberon and Titania with its concentration on the changeling boy, which also has its homosexual overtones. He again locates this aspect of the dream within the play as a whole. 'The order for which the play strives is a severely patriarchal one, which, by its very nature, engenders ambivalence and hostility in women and this produces a constant straining towards disorder'.¹²⁵ 'It is as if', Faber thinks, 'the play is suggesting that *social order* can be achieved only when personal order is achieved, personal order implying the actualization of the male's masculinity and the female's femininity'.¹²⁶ Later critics might wish to put this the other way round, that personal order can only be achieved through changes in the social order, and there is certainly precedence in psychoanalysis for such a view.¹²⁷ Tempting though it must be to want to apply Freudian dream-analysis, Faber might have made his point about patriarchy just as well from Freud's perceptive analysis of gender relations, and the sexual repression of women.

Faber has suggested that his essay will illuminate 'something about Shakespeare's depiction of mental process'.¹²⁸ He writes of Shakespeare's need to find cause for 'the unconscious

¹²⁴ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 188 (original emphasis).

¹²⁵ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 188 (original emphasis)

¹²⁶ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 188.

¹²⁷ See Sigmund Freud, 'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness', 1908, *Standard Edition*, Volume IX (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1959), pp. 177-204; Sigmund Freud, 'Civilization and Its Discontents', 1930, *Standard Edition*, Volume XXI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 57-146.

¹²⁸ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 180.

dimension of human conduct'.¹²⁹ Rather than Shakespeare's need to find cause, I suggest that Shakespeare's wish is to portray it. Faber may not be as extreme as Gui in his attempt to link Bottom's dream to the infant Shakespeare's jealousy, but this still betrays a wish to identify Shakespeare's creative purpose. More plausible is Faber's assessment in his final paragraph that when this play was written Shakespeare had come 'to really appreciate ... the unconscious or "inexplicable" side of human behavior'.¹³⁰

The difference between Gui, twenty years earlier, and Faber is noticeable. Faber is a member of a different interpretative community, albeit interested in applying psychoanalysis to literature. As such he makes obvious reference to other examples of literary criticism, but also to other psychoanalytic writing. Staying close to the text, Faber enlarges his interpretation to include not just personal sexual relations, but gender relations on a larger scale. He concentrates more on the actual relationship between Lysander and Hermia as the trigger for his own associations to her dream, far from Gui's speculative trigger for Bottom's dream of the forthcoming marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta.

There is an apologia towards the beginning of Faber's paper for tackling Hermia's dream, which casts light on the cultural backcloth to psychoanalytic criticism, now in the 1970s. Wondering why no-one has up to that point explored Hermia's dream, he refers to living 'in an age, as everyone knows, of omnipresent phallic symbols, incestuous fantasies, repressed impulses, seething unconscious energies, primal scenes, etc.', although he suggests that his interpretation is not as simple as these obvious possibilities.¹³¹ Indeed it is not simple, although psychoanalytic criticism such as Gui's, complex though it seems, is also rather

¹²⁹ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 189.

¹³⁰ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 189.

¹³¹ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 180.

simplistic – a simple equation of image and psychoanalytic idea.

In Faber the influence of feminism, and the more radical questioning of the late 1960s, can be detected in his recognition of gender conflict. Above all there is an obvious awareness in Faber of a wider horizon rather than the narrow confines of psychoanalytic theory, hardly changed from psychoanalysis at the time the death of Freud, as though it was not allowed to develop any further.

Hermia's Dream: Norman Holland (1979)

Writing a few years later than Faber, Norman Holland's 1979 paper on Hermia's dream presents a different perspective, since his discussion of that dream provides an example of how a psychoanalytic critic might interpret a fictional dream. He describes three different approaches to psychoanalytic criticism. These different approaches are an attempt to give dreams that are 'airy nothing[s] ... a local habitation and a name' (THESEUS, 5.1.16-170).¹³² These distinctive approaches are also described in an article by Holland in a more general article on psychoanalysis and literature in 1993.¹³³

What is not clear in his analysis of Hermia's dream is whether he is really attempting a psychoanalytic critique of the dream, or playing with possibilities to illustrate how psychoanalytic criticism had changed over a short period of some 15–20 years. He acknowledges that the first approach he describes would have been the one he would have used had he been analysing the dream ten years previously – therefore the type of analysis he had applied in his 1963 paper on Romeo's dream.¹³⁴

¹³² Holland, 'Hermia's dream', pp. 369-89.

¹³³ Norman Holland, 'Psychoanalysis and literature – past and present', pp. 5-21.

¹³⁴ Holland, 'Hermia's dream', p. 378

He summarises the three phases before describing each more fully: the first phase of psychoanalysis would use Hermia's dream 'as an illustration of someone's unconscious made conscious'; the second would 'place her dream within a system of ego functions'; the third 'would use this airy nothing to symbolize ourselves to ourselves'.¹³⁵ He seems to favour his third type of approach to psychoanalytic criticism, although it is a much watered down version of the two earlier methods.

After recapitulating the events that culminate in the dream, Holland describes the dream as a nightmare from which Hermia has trouble waking. She speaks as if she is actually being attacked by a serpent: 'Help me. Lysander, help me! Do thy best/To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast' (HERMIA, 2.2.145-6). Hermia wakes, knows she has been dreaming and relates her dream to Lysander, believing him still to be beside her. Lysander in the dream did nothing but watch and smile – in reality he can do nothing because he is no longer there. Interpreting Lysander in the dream from a Freudian perspective, Holland, like Faber, initially takes the serpent to symbolise the penis, so that masculinity in the dream is split between the attacking phallus and the distant lover.¹³⁶

What Holland clearly demonstrates is that as a psychoanalytic-literary critic he has expanded and adapted the psychoanalytic method that would have been part of his personal analysis. Instead of, as Gui and Faber, relying solely on Freudian theory he introduces some principles from Erik Erikson, a Danish-American analyst trained by Anna Freud, who might better be described as a Neo-Freudian. Holland values Erikson's extension of Anna Freud's theory of mechanisms of defence: a dream represents two defences, denial and distortion,

¹³⁵ Holland, 'Hermia's dream', p. 369.

¹³⁶ Holland, 'Hermia's dream', p. 370.

which Holland identifies in Hermia's dream and which he thinks are 'fundamental to Hermia's character'.¹³⁷

He believes that Hermia demonstrates 'a distinct recurring pattern' of contradicting others, starting with her response to Theseus's 'Demetrius is a worthy gentleman' (1.1.52): her first words in the play are 'So is Lysander' (1.1.53). Holland elicits more examples:

Call it a concern for alternatives, for other possibilities, or for an elsewhere:

Lysander as an alternative to Demetrius, her judgment as an alternative to her father's, her boldness contrasted with her modesty, or the alternatives the law allows her ... she describes how she and Lysander will run away, again looking for an elsewhere, an alternative to Athens, 'To seek new friends and stranger companies' (I.i.219). I would phrase Hermia's personal style as the seeking of some alternative *in order to amend something closer to herself*.¹³⁸

In Act 4 the motif occurs again, in Hermia's description of her waking state: 'Methinks I see these things with parted eye/ When every thing seems double' (4.1.189-90); and in her last words, responding to Demetrius' call that they should follow Theseus, she says: 'Yea, and my father' (HERMIA, 4.1.194-6). Expressing an alternative could be argued to be a manifest character trait. 'In order to amend something closer to herself' is a better example of an attempt to look at unconscious motivation. Holland sees this trait coming out in the three examples of psychoanalytic criticism.

¹³⁷ Holland, 'Hermia's dream', p. 371. Erikson develops Freud's three psycho-sexual stages of infant sexuality to eight psycho-social stages that cover the whole of life. Apart from his contribution on defences, he is probably better known for his writing on the achievement of identity in *Childhood and Society* (London: Penguin Books, 1965) and *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968).

¹³⁸ Holland, 'Hermia's dream', p. 371 (my emphasis).

The first ‘classical’ method of applied psychoanalysis would follow the symbols in the dream, using the dreamer’s free associations. Holland acknowledges it is a literary dream, so these associations can only be inferred, for instance by ‘*guessing* at the day residue’ in the dream, particularly the conversation between Hermia and Lysander before they lie down to sleep.¹³⁹ I emphasise ‘guessing’ although the conversation between Hermia and Lysander is more certain evidence.

In this example of classical interpretation Holland follows a Freudian principle of identifying the conflict between the wish for separation – ‘Lie further off’ – and, as Holland phrases it, ‘union’. Freud identifies ‘wish’ and ‘fear’ as opposites, two sides of the same coin, the one masking the other.¹⁴⁰ Holland identifies a possible link between Hermia’s request ‘lie further off’ (2.2.50), the name ‘Lies-ander’, word-play that is typically Freudian, but is also of course what a literary critic might propose, conscious of Shakespeare’s inventive employment of language. Holland exemplifies the psychoanalytic tendency to go beyond the text when he suggests that Hermia in her sleep may have overheard the interaction between Helena and Lysander, and that her dream represents Lysander as the snake that lies – prefiguring Hermia’s comparison of Demetrius to a double-tongued snake (3.2.72).¹⁴¹ Yet his namesake the literary critic Peter Holland plays with similar word associations in his commentary on the play.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Holland, ‘Hermia’s dream’, p. 372.

¹⁴⁰ ‘... should not a dream correspond sometimes to a fulfilled wish, sometimes ... to the opposite of that or to a realized fear, but sometimes express an intention, a warning, a reflection with its “pros” and “cons”.’ (Freud, ‘Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis’, p. 221).

¹⁴¹ Holland, ‘Hermia’s dream’, p. 374.

¹⁴² P. Holland, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, pp. 13-16. Peter Holland’s interpretation is close to that of his namesake, whom he acknowledges together with Faber in a footnote. It is difficult to know how far he draws upon Norman Holland, or has been influenced by his paper. Peter Holland’s reference to snakes in the fairies’ lullaby is also in Norman Holland’s paper.

Some of the interpretations Holland suggests are not confined to psychoanalytic criticism – they could readily be part of a literary analysis. The difference between Holland and Gui is that most of Holland’s interpretations come from a more straightforward use of the text. Holland can however be more speculative – he suggests Hermia’s adolescent difficulties were to do with her relationship with her mother, a mother who is nowhere referred to in the play.¹⁴³ My question reading this first method of interpretation is whether Holland would go along with such an interpretation, or is this simply a pastiche? It is difficult to tell.

The initial discussion of Hermia’s dream contains elements that would be expected within a literary analysis of the text, which is not surprising for a professor of literature. He illustrates the common ground between psychoanalysis and literary criticism in identifying word-play, and in the handling of the serpent image and sexuality. As Peter Holland says, this does not have to be specifically Freudian.¹⁴⁴ Norman Holland’s identification of Hermia’s tendency to put an alternative response forward is again a comment that one might expect of a literary critic, although a more contemporary feminist view might be that Hermia is a woman who knows and speaks her own mind. At the same time particular psychoanalytic glosses (wish/fear, the inclusion of orality, and Hermia’s relationship with her mother) demonstrate what might be called tentative, imaginative interpretations, based less on the text and more on analytic theory.

The initial phase of psychoanalytic interpretation tends to treat Hermia as if she were a real person and leads only to a narrow meaning. Moving to the second phase, Holland, like Faber, says that the dream has to be understood within the context of the whole dream play. The focus is still on separation and fusion, and these themes, Holland believes, permeate the

¹⁴³ Holland, ‘Hermia’s dream’, pp. 377-8.

¹⁴⁴ P. Holland, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p. 13.

play. The *Dream* begins

with the separation of lovers. Theseus and Hippolyta have to wait out the four days till their wedding, the fairy king and queen, Oberon and Titania, have quarreled, and, of course, the lovers have tangled up their affections and drawn down the threats of the duke and the father.¹⁴⁵

The conclusion of the play disentangles and unites the couples.

Drawing even more on the play as a whole than in the first approach, Holland identifies a further theme, that of cruelty. Theseus has won Hippolyta's love 'doing thee injuries' (THESEUS, 1.1.17); Oberon humiliates Titania; each of the young men 'deserts and reviles and threatens his future wife'. The play within the play 'is both the funniest and bloodiest part of the play'.¹⁴⁶

This second type of interpretation is less distinctly psychoanalytic, and shows an even greater convergence of literary and analytic criticism, as if Holland is integrating his earlier 'evangelical' phase of applied psychoanalysis with his main discipline of literary criticism, which, as Holland's third phase shows, is itself changing in its perspective. Holland is critical of this second phase of psychoanalytic interpretation since, like the first it 'treat(s) Hermia or her dream or her play as though they were "out there"'.¹⁴⁷ Each method demonstrates 'coolly intellectual curiosity', without any connection (other than intellectual?) to readers, who will shape the dream and the play to their own character.¹⁴⁸

The first and second ways of interpretation still have some value, but they are far from exhaustive, and they have a tendency, Holland says, to assert that their reading is the best.

¹⁴⁵ Holland, 'Hermia's dream', p. 380.

¹⁴⁶ Holland, 'Hermia's dream', p. 381.

¹⁴⁷ Holland, 'Hermia's dream', p. 381.

¹⁴⁸ Holland, 'Hermia's dream', p. 381.

In demonstrating the third way of interpretation, Holland becomes far more personal. It consists of Holland's personal associations to the play, which he recognises will be different from, if sometimes in places the same as, another's.¹⁴⁹ He was writing at a time when the sexual revolution was the stuff of debate, novel and film. The freedom of the swinging sixties had been translated into more experimentation in relationships, changes in sexual morality, the greater acceptability of divorce, wife-swapping of the type seen in John Updike's *Couples*, and different attitudes to possessiveness in love, and to fidelity and infidelity.¹⁵⁰ While Holland consciously accepts the change in American society, he acknowledges that deeper down he might have other feelings. Does he, like Hermia as he interprets her, want to contradict the accepted norms? He never quite says this, but Hermia's dream and the play trigger his emotional struggle with notions of upholding old standards of fidelity. He does not know how to do that in a context where friends' marriages are breaking down, and his students are experimenting with relationships:

In other words, if I bring my own associations to Hermia's dream and its context, I begin to read the comedy of which it is a part as a rather uncomfortable hovering between different views of love. In one view, love is a total, consuming desire like a baby's for food. In the other, the relation is less demanding. It admits a change of heart or appetite. Yet so cool a lover may be hateful in his very smiling, just as hateful as the snake is in his eating.¹⁵¹

The dream, the play, and indeed literature, challenge notions of identity (again a pervasive

¹⁴⁹ Holland recognises both sameness and difference in the notion of identity.

¹⁵⁰ John Updike, *Couples* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1968). Holland does not refer to any literature, such as this, nor the work of Christopher Lasch such as *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979). They illustrate well the time at which Holland was writing his article.

¹⁵¹ Holland, 'Hermia's dream', p. 38

trope at the time Holland wrote): ‘Just as Hermia develops a variation on her identity theme when she dreams, so you and I develop variations on our identity themes when we read her dream. Thus we arrive at a new kind of psychoanalytic method with literature’.¹⁵² Holland calls this “transactive criticism”. We actively create – we *transact* – Hermia’s dream and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. As critics it is our job to articulate that relation explicitly’.¹⁵³

This kind of subjectivity is actually implicit in the first two ways of interpreting the dream, although Holland appears to confine subjective interpretation to the third way of interpretation. When he wrote this article literary criticism of the *Dream* too was being challenged by social and political change, and like him it engaged with contemporary issues such as gender, sexuality, feminism, and colonialism.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless criticism has not been quite so subjective as Holland’s third way, which is highly individualistic – more like reader-response criticism, a term which Holland prefers in a later article.¹⁵⁵ Such an approach says more about the critic than about the text, as Holland’s concluding sentence shows: ‘... we dream [Hermia’s] dream for ourselves, and as we know ourselves so we know the dream, until its local habitation is here and its name is us.’¹⁵⁶

The question therefore must be: do Holland’s readers learn more about the play from this third approach to criticism? Or is it rather, that the reader knows more about what Holland thinks (and feels) about the play, which may (but may not) stimulate the reader’s thinking about the play (and about Holland). His description of a third approach is more what might be expected of an introduction to the play by its director in the programme notes. It is not clear that it is literary criticism as it is normally practised.

¹⁵² Holland, ‘Hermia’s dream’, p. 383.

¹⁵³ Holland, ‘Hermia’s dream’, p. 383, original emphasis.

¹⁵⁴ Tredell, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, pp. 88-105.

¹⁵⁵ Holland, ‘Reader-response criticism’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79 (1998), pp. 1203-11.

¹⁵⁶ Holland, ‘Hermia’s dream’, p. 388.

If Holland's analysis of types of psychoanalytic criticism is right, then Gui's paper clearly falls into the first phase – making the unconscious conscious. It is probably the second phase of psychoanalytic criticism that is most frequently seen in the readings of the *Dream* studied in this thesis. His third phase in this article on Hermia's dream is more limited than in his later paper on psychoanalysis and literature (1993), where he also discusses phases of literary criticism. He refers there to the third phase of psychoanalysis as including object-relations, Lacanian psychoanalysis, feminist psychoanalysis, self-psychology, and Erikson's work on identity, all of which have in common replacing earlier versions of psychoanalysis with 'psychoanalyses of the self'.¹⁵⁷ This is a much fuller description of a third phase, of which there are a few examples in later chapters.¹⁵⁸ It is Holland's equivalent of Wright's review of later types of psychoanalytic criticism such as Lacan, structuralism and post-structuralism, and feminist psychoanalysis. As an example of post-modernism Holland refers to another aspect of the third phase, the one he calls 'transactive criticism' in 'Hermia's dream'.¹⁵⁹ The difficulty with this term is that it could be said of any psychoanalytic critic that they write from their experience of the text, bringing, for example, their experience as psychoanalysts to their diverse interpretations of the text. Not anything goes.

Both Holland and Faber start with a conventional form of individual dream interpretation. For both concentration on the individual character is insufficient, and each goes on to set the dream within the context of the play, and suggest that the play's themes can be understood through the individual dream. They then part company. Holland comments that Faber's

¹⁵⁷ Holland, 'Psychoanalysis and literature', p. 6.

¹⁵⁸ See Goldstein in chapter 3, and Thomas MacCary and Carol Gilligan in chapter 4.

¹⁵⁹ N. N. Holland, 'Hermia's dream', *Annual of Psychoanalysis* 7 (1979), pp. 382 ff.

analysis has ‘the limitation that comes from resting the analysis on the overly simple one-to-one symbolic equations so popular in the first exuberant years of applying psychoanalytic symbolism’, a criticism (to be fair) that applies rather more to Gui than Faber.¹⁶⁰ Faber is concerned with the struggle that he sees as taking place within all the lovers, between conscious and unconscious, between the civilised and socialised mind and the primitive irrational passionate mind – in Freudian terms between the controlling patriarchal superego and the primitive id. If for both critics separation is a theme, for Faber it is this separation and potential conflict between superego and id; whereas for Holland it is separation between persons, and through that a further separation between the reasonable ego, understanding how things change, and the anxious super-ego, wanting to keep everything ordered.

Faber places his interpretation firmly in the patriarchal and ordered world of Shakespeare’s time, and identifies what he believes to be Shakespeare’s development in his writing of the portrayal of the split nature of persons. He does not engage with the more contemporary associations that Holland’s exposition of the third approach includes, such as conflicting responses to the less ordered social mores of the 1970s. It is as if in Faber’s *Dream* there is awareness of two sides in conflict, imagined in the play to exist in separate places, the real of Athens, the imaginary of the wood; whereas in Holland’s *Dream* the imaginary is now happening in the circles in which he moves and teaches, and distinctions between the disordered wood and the ordered court are much less clear.

Given their status as literary critics both Faber and Holland receive considerably more attention in later criticism of the play than Gui. Peter Holland refers to both papers as

¹⁶⁰ Holland, ‘Hermia’s dream’, pp. 379-80.

Freudian readings ‘among many’.¹⁶¹ Kehler in one survey of criticism devotes a paragraph to Faber’s paper, as having ‘valuable aesthetic and social dimensions’. She summarises Holland’s argument in another survey.¹⁶² Richard Dutton reprints Holland’s essay in a collection of critical essays; and Murray Schwartz and Coppelia Kahn similarly include it in a book of psychoanalytic essays.¹⁶³ Hinely describes Holland’s as the richer reading.¹⁶⁴

Two short notices by psychoanalytic reviewers differ in their response to Holland’s ‘transactive criticism’: Melvin Stanger believes the method enriches understanding of a particular dream.¹⁶⁵ Sander Abend is less convinced, seeing it as ‘merely ... the extension of the practice of the critic’s use of his own associations to a literary stimulus to produce increasingly broader and more personal interpretations of meaning’.¹⁶⁶ But while Gui receives little attention, what is concerning is that Faber’s paper is only referred to once and Holland’s paper twice in later psychoanalytic-literary papers about the play: Faber’s by Jan Lawson Hinely and Holland’s by Hinely and Thomas Frosch. Neither Faber nor Holland is cited by psychoanalyst critics.¹⁶⁷

Later psychoanalytic contributions: whose dream is the ‘*Dream*’?

The title of the play raises the question about what dream or whose dream is referred to as taking place on a midsummer’s night. Gui believes it is Bottom’s dream, which not only encompasses the central acts, but also provides the key to the whole play.¹⁶⁸ It has been

¹⁶¹ Peter Holland, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p.14n.

¹⁶² Kehler, ‘A bibliographic survey’, p.39; Kehler, ‘The critical backstory and the state of the art’, in Buccola, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream: a Critical Guide*, p. 28.

¹⁶³ Richard Dutton, ed. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream: Contemporary Critical Essays*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), pp. 61-83; Schwartz and Coppelia Kahn, eds, *Representing Shakespeare*, pp. 1-20.

¹⁶⁴ Hinely, ‘Expounding the Dream’, p.122.

¹⁶⁵ M. Stanger, ‘Abstract of “Hermia’s dream”’, *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 51 (1982), p. 479.

¹⁶⁶ S. Abend ‘Book notices’, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 31 (1983), p. 347.

¹⁶⁷ Frosch, ‘The missing child’, p. 500; Hinely, ‘Expounding the Dream’, p. 121.

¹⁶⁸ I do not forget that Gui also sees the whole play as about Shakespeare’s oedipal rivalry. But he does not suggest that it is Shakespeare’s dream.

questioned whether Bottom's is actually a dream – despite his words 'I have had a dream' (4.1.102). If his 'most rare vision' is a dream, does Titania's 'What visions I have seen' (4.1.75) indicate that she has dreamt as well? Has the audience been witnessing enacted dreams?

When Faber and Holland write about Hermia's dream there is no doubt that it is a dream, since she has been asleep (but so have Bottom and Titania), and she relates her dream to Lysander before she realises he is no longer there. But are there other candidates for the 'dream'? The literary critic Peter Holland writes of 'Bottom and the other "dreamers"' being all the more human for having dreamed.¹⁶⁹ He also writes of 'how the lovers understand their dream', and of the dream between Bottom and Titania as diminishing sexuality rather than intensifying it.¹⁷⁰ Then there is the 'dream-play', which as Peter Holland observes, 'had always been a less common device' than references to dreams in early modern literature.¹⁷¹ But it is referred to as such by Puck as a possible response for those who do not like the play (5.1.419).

All such variations on whose dream it is occur in later psychoanalytic literature, although in no case is there any attempt at the extended interpretations of Gui, Faber or Norman Holland. Stanley Palombo writes about Demetrius's and Titania's dreams; Jan Lawson Hinely about a range of dreams; James Calderwood about Theseus's dream; and Margot Waddell about the audience's dream. Each deserves a brief mention since their different approaches illustrate how the play has stimulated discussion of dreams in general or the dreams in the play.

¹⁶⁹ Peter Holland, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 9.

¹⁷⁰ Peter Holland, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 9 and p. 73.

¹⁷¹ Peter Holland, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 17.

For example, Stanley Palombo, a Washington DC psychoanalyst, uses Demetrius and Titania in his 1983 article to illustrate his theory of two types of dream, anxiety dreams and correction dreams.¹⁷² An anxiety dream occurs when the sorting of memories (recent and past) becomes too threatening. A correction dream indicates a smoother process.

Acknowledging that others have come to similar conclusions, Palombo believes dreams enable connections to be made to highly charged experiences from both the day before and earlier memories. Demetrius wakes up from dreaming twice. When he is first anointed with the love-juice and wakes, his dream experience is one of a highly anxious state (DEMETRIUS, 3.2.137). His unrequited passion for Hermia is transferred to Helena. When he wakes after sleeping alongside the other lovers, he has experienced a correction dream. When Titania wakes from her vision of herself and the ass, she disengages ‘from her infantile object’, the Indian boy.¹⁷³ It has been like a correction dream. Palombo concludes his two examples from the *Dream*: ‘As Shakespeare takes great pains to tell us here, the matching between present and past accomplished by the dream is neither simple nor mechanical, but an act of discovery capable of drawing on the full powers of the creative imagination’.¹⁷⁴

Jan Lawson Hinely (1987), assistant professor of English at Ohio University, in an essay in *Psychoanalytic Approaches to Literature and Film* includes all the possible dreams in the play. She not only discusses the ‘quadruple dream of the four lovers’ in the wood, but ‘the triple dream of Bottom, Titania, and Oberon’ together with the play within the play, which she calls a “‘dream’”, through which ‘individual sexual anxieties are released and

¹⁷² S. R. Palombo, ‘The genius of the dream’, *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 43 (1983), pp. 301-313.

¹⁷³ Palombo, ‘The genius of the dream’, p. 308.

¹⁷⁴ Palombo, ‘The genius of the dream’, p. 308.

transformed, and social harmony is reestablished'.¹⁷⁵ This almost encompasses the whole play, which Hinely sees as concerned with patriarchal attitudes, gender relations, and sexual tensions. Hinely seems strongly influenced by Gui's interpretation of Bottom's dream, although she adds that his dream also has a mystical quality to it, as seen in his garbled version of the biblical verse 'Eye hath not seen, etc.'. ¹⁷⁶ There is, however, a notable difference between Gui and herself: while psychoanalytic theory underpins her argument, her psychoanalytic gloss is on the manifest content rather than the latent content of the text.

The psychoanalytic-literary critic James Calderwood (1992), in a chapter enticingly part-titled 'Theseus's dream', suggests that Theseus dreams that he is 'transformed into a fairy king married to a fairy queen even more uncontrollable than he fears his Amazonian queen may turn out to be'.¹⁷⁷ He is troubled by Hippolyta's response to his treatment of Hermia, in her enigmatic silence as they leave the stage in Act 1. It is an interesting speculation, which relies on doubling the Athenian duke and the fairy king. Calderwood also wonders whether Titania might also be part of Hippolyta's dream: 'Certainly she has as much reason as he to be troubled about their forthcoming marriage'.¹⁷⁸

Margot Waddell (2003) has a doctorate in literature and is a British child psychotherapist

¹⁷⁵ Hinely, 'Expounding the dream', p. 120.

¹⁷⁶ Hinely, 'Expounding the dream', pp. 135-6.

¹⁷⁷ Calderwood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 54.

¹⁷⁸ Calderwood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 54. Helen Hackett similarly suggests that Oberon and Titania are 'the dream-personae of Theseus and Hippolyta through which the Athenian couple can enact their secret desires and work out their buried resentments' (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers, 1997), p. 53). An interesting representation of Calderwood's suggestion of Hippolyta being troubled by the match with Theseus is seen in the appearances of Hippolyta in Acts 1 and 5 in Davido's direction of the play for BBC TV in 2016. Hippolyta in both scenes is bound with three padlocks into a straitjacket, and is forced to read her response to Theseus: 'Four days will quickly ...' (1.1.7-11). Otherwise she is silent, is absent from the hunting scene, and only at the very end when the fairies come on the stage and Theseus has died of a heart attack, is she released from her bonds. Hippolyta was much earlier portrayed in stage as a captive in Michael Langham's 1960 production at the Old Vic where Hippolyta was in handcuffs; and in Jiri Fréhar's 1977 production in Prague, where she was imprisoned in a white wooden cage.

working in London. She highlights the tension between Hippolyta's acknowledgement of the 'strain of creative mental functioning' that has a transformative power, and Theseus's 'tendency to decry it'. She observes (almost uniquely amongst the critics discussed in this chapter) that

the impact of the play's dream-world extends beyond the experience of any single character or couple. The end of the final act makes it clear that the dramatic totality is also to be thought of as a dream – the audience's dream ... At the end, Hippolyta suggests to Theseus that for the play to be meaningful: It must be your imagination then, and not theirs (1.1.210). The audience, in other words, imaginatively has to participate in order for a creative event to occur.¹⁷⁹

What she suggests perhaps sums up the various interpretations of the possible dreams in the play as they are interpreted by the psychoanalytic critics and psychoanalytic-literary critics: the dreams come alive in the imagination of the critics, whose interpretations may similarly trigger the imagination of their readers.

What is significant is that following Faber's and Holland's focus on Hermia's dream, no psychoanalytic critic actually ventures again into dream-interpretation of dreams in the play in any depth. I suggest that this is partly because dream interpretation itself falls out of favour in psychoanalytic practice, particularly as it begins to be practiced on the basis of once-weekly or twice-weekly appointments. There is no time for lengthy dream analysis. Dreams retain their interest for the psychoanalytic-literary critics, but even then as only one part of the whole.

¹⁷⁹ M. Waddell, "'A local habitation and a name': the therapeutic encounter and the quest for meaning", *Fort Da*, 9 (2003), p. 54 (original emphasis).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that despite Gui's initiative in exposing the *Dream* to a psychoanalytic critique no other psychoanalyst has followed his lead in such exhaustive dream interpretation. The two explorations of Hermia's dream, the only actual dream in the play in the opinion of many literary critics, by literary critics Faber and Holland, provide a psychoanalytic reading of some importance, less fanciful than Gui. They crucially, like Freud, recognise the importance, as in psychoanalytic therapy itself, of placing the dream in a context of both the day-residue and the whole play. Later psychoanalytic references to dreams and dreaming in the play are brief. For the most part they occur in psychoanalytic-literary criticism rather than in psychoanalytic criticism. In fact, apart from Gui, the only other psychoanalysts writing about the play's dreams are Palombo and Waddell. Palombo's treatment of the play is confined to a few paragraphs illustrating two types of dream – anxiety dreams and correction dreams. Palombo does not comment on the play itself. Waddell writes more about the play, but not about the dreams in it.¹⁸⁰

What is noticeable about psychoanalytic dream interpretation of dreams in the play is that it does not refer to what dreams might have meant for Shakespeare and his contemporaries.¹⁸¹ This lack of historical enquiry is strange given the emphasis in

¹⁸⁰ Waddell writes a chapter on the play with Meg Harris Williams in their book, *The Chamber of Maiden Thought: Literary Origins of the Psychoanalytic Model of the Mind* (London: Routledge, 1991).

¹⁸¹ Marjorie Garber's summary of what dreams might mean in early modern literature cannot be bettered: '[Dreams] could be omens or portents; they could be caused by bodily sensations (heat, cold, an upset stomach); or they could be divinely inspired. Dreams could reflect the present or the past, or they could predict the future. They could be signs of guilt or of a guilty conscience, or they could be caused by demons or bewitchment ... every one of these types of dreams and dream interpretation shows up somewhere in Shakespeare's plays' (*Dream in Shakespeare* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), p. xiv). Garber is not averse to making connections with psychoanalysis, referring to concepts such as the unconscious, dream symbols, splitting, manifest and latent content, condensation (including puns and wordplay), displacement, sexuality, the composite person (standing for several functions in the one figure), etc. She pays some attention to Hermia's dream, 'the only literal dream in the play', referring to its twin aspects: the snake as a Freudian image of sexuality and of sexual fears in Hermia's mind, and the predictive

psychoanalytic practice on a patient's history. Such failure to acknowledge the possible value of another discipline is not shared by literary critics such as, for example, Marjorie Garber or Peter Holland, although the majority of major critical readings of the *Dream*, such as C. L. Barber's, Harold Brooks's and R. A. Foakes's do not assign any particular significance to actual dreams.¹⁸² Nevertheless in terms of sheer number of words on dream interpretation related to the play, the evidence is that it is literary critics who are more inclined to venture into discussion of dream interpretation than psychoanalytic critics.¹⁸³

Could it be that the psychoanalysts dare not venture into this territory, knowing how slippery dream analysis can be?¹⁸⁴ Other psychoanalytic papers on other aspects of the play show no such caution. One reason I have already advanced above is that dream interpretation in clinical practice has lessened in significance with the passing of time. Writing in 1969, for instance, Charles Brenner notes that 'there is no convincing evidence that dream interpretation still offers the quickest and easiest road to a knowledge of the hidden workings of the mind at the present time, as it doubtless did sixty five years ago'.¹⁸⁵ What is clear from a later collection of papers, in which

element of estrangement from Lysander (pp. 72-3).

¹⁸² C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Brooks, Harold, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; R. A. Foakes, ed., *William Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream*, updated ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁸³ Peter Holland describes both a Freudian and a Jungian approach to dreams, but dismisses both approaches with the remark that 'modern scientific analysis of dream' has moved to the psycho-physiology (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 20). However, a possible Freudian interpretation that he describes is not that dissimilar from his own comments on the dream, and he appears to approve of Norman Holland's paper on Hermia's dream. Peter Holland acknowledges the place of day-residue in understanding a dream, and while he says that Hermia must be allowed to interpret her own dream, he is not averse to making a few suggestions himself (pp. 13-16).

¹⁸⁴ The literary critic Barbara Freedman in her chapter on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* discusses the impossibility of dream interpretation, but so too 'the entire interpretive process, whether of dreams, literature or history' (*Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 177).

¹⁸⁵ C. Brenner, 'Some comments on technical precepts in psychoanalysis', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 17 (1969), p. 345. See also the references to Masud Khan's paper, in

Brenner's article is re-published, is that in America dream interpretation has changed since the mid twentieth century so that the interest is more in the manifest dream than in the latent thoughts and feelings, which classical psychoanalysis had valued over and above the remembered dream. The editor of the 1993 book *The Dream Discourse Today* also writes of American psychoanalysis: 'Significantly, both ego and self psychologists have moved towards appreciation of the meaning contained rather than disguised in the manifest content of the dream'.¹⁸⁶ Papers in her book that maintain their focus on the latent elements in the dream are mostly by British analysts. Since the other noticeable aspect of the papers discussed in this thesis is that they are mainly authored by American analysts and psychoanalytic-literary critics, this adds another factor to account for lack of interest in dream interpretation in the *Dream*. American literary critics who write from a psychoanalytic perspective also tend to concentrate on the manifest content of the dreams rather than upon latent meaning.

As subsequent chapters will show, psychoanalysts from the 1970s onwards are more interested in the relationship between the characters, and what they call the 'inner world' of the characters, in line with developments in psychoanalysis. These developments have more and more recognised the importance of interpersonal and intrapersonal relatedness in the study of personal development and in clinical work. This represents another difference between Gui's paper and the other contributions on dreams examined in this chapter.

Psychoanalytic interpretations of the dreams in the *Dream* nevertheless have remained

footnote 19 above and Sara Flanders' edited book, *The Dream Discourse Today* (London: Routledge, 1993), which reflects the different uses of dreams in psychoanalysis from Freud's time.

¹⁸⁶ Sara Flanders, 'Introduction', in Flanders ed. *The Dream Discourse Today*.

of interest to psychoanalytic-literary critics, who I suggest have valued the parallels between Freud's critical analysis of language in dreams and their own critical approach: symbolic language, parallel uses of images in different parts of a text, puns and condensation. Much of the dream-work that Freud identified is common to textual analysis. As John Forrester writes about the fit between psychoanalysis and literary criticism: 'This closeness of fit resides in the perceived homology and the notions of style, narrative and device with the mechanism that the psychoanalyst presumes to be at work in the products of neurosis'.¹⁸⁷ There is also a perceived link between dreams and psychoanalysis, so that it is difficult to imagine one without the other – even if clinical practice does not for the most part place the same emphasis upon dream interpretation as was once the case.

It is difficult to ignore literary dreams. Different interpretations are put upon Hermia's dream by Mervyn Faber and Norman Holland; and Marjorie Garber and Peter Holland in turn approach Hermia's dream quite differently. Peter Holland's views on Hermia's dream have sufficient resemblance both to Norman Holland's paper, and to psychoanalytic word association, to lead me to wonder whether there is any great difference between later psychoanalytic criticism and the literary approaches to dreams. It is clear that a literary critical as well as psychoanalytic critical approach to the dream or dreams in the play is bound to be a subjective one. It is the very nature of dreams, that they are capable of different meanings, and they do not follow the logic of most narratives. This does not render them meaningless, but encourages imaginative responses to their presence in the play.

¹⁸⁷ J. Forrester, *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 262. There is, as Forrester's title indicates, a seductiveness about psychoanalytic interpretation, which gives rise to highly subjective interpretations, but these are not necessarily any more subjective than some of the speculative constructions put upon the play in literary criticism.

Since an author, such as Jensen, or a dramatist such as Shakespeare, writes a dream into their work, it can be assumed that including a dream serves a purpose. It may be impossible, without an author actually revealing more about their creative process, to make the sort of bold jump that Gui makes in reading Bottom's dream as the working through of something in Shakespeare's own memory or experience; but it is reasonable to ask what connection the dream has to the text; and it is possible that greater appreciation of the dilemmas and delights of fictional characters can be enhanced by reflecting on their dreams, particularly through the surrounding narrative and through the metaphors and symbolism present in the reported dream. In their different ways psychoanalysts and literary critics do this respectively with dreams or texts. This chapter suggests that each type of critic can contribute to the other's enterprise, and that Faber and Holland are particularly good examples of the interplay between psychoanalysis and literary criticism. If Gui's premiss, that the *Dream* is Bottom's dream, is suspect, nevertheless he too demonstrates just how rich a psychoanalytic interpretation can be.

Two: A dream in a dream and the play in the play

There is a one feature about dreams, discussed briefly by Freud, which has been neglected by psychoanalytic critics in their interpretation of dreams in the *Dream*. In this chapter I examine this feature, the dream within a dream, in order to look at possibilities for further analysis of the place of one dream within another dream in the play. I first explain how Freud understood a dream within a dream, giving an example of such a dream in clinical work; and then summarise the development of Freud's idea in some clinical papers written in the third quarter of the twentieth century.¹ I use the discussion in these papers to develop the argument in the previous chapter, that psychoanalytic criticism carries more weight in dream interpretation when it follows more recent clinical practice, of concentrating on the manifest content of a dream rather than attempting to interpret the latent content of a fictional dream. I suggest that this is an alternative approach to Faber's and Holland's interpretations of Hermia's dream; and I propose a different reading of both Hermia's dream and Bottom's dream, both of which take place in the dream wood and/or in the dream play.

Psychoanalytic critics have generally neglected to make more of the phenomenon of the dream within the dream. The first to take up Freud's discussion of it was Ernest Jones in 1949 when he made a brief suggestion that a play within a play, such as *The Mousetrap* in *Hamlet*, has a similar function in relation to the whole play as does a dream within a dream.² I reflect on two previously examined psychoanalytic papers by Mark Kanzer

¹ Silber, A., 'A significant "dream within a dream"', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 31(1983), pp. 899-915; F. Lipschitz, 'The dream within a dream – profection vs. reflection', *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 26 (1990), pp. 716-31; E. J. Mahon, 'Dreams within dreams', *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 57 (2002), pp. 76-95.

² Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus*, p. 29.

(1951) and Weston Gui (1952) and their discussion of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, a play within the play.³ Although they discuss it, they do not make the same link as Jones to a dream within a dream. I then show how in 1956 the idea put forward by Jones was taken up by Alexander Grinstein, in a short but significant article in which he expanded and further illustrated the Jones parallel, including *Pyramus and Thisbe* as a further example of the device.⁴ While Grinstein's paper is only referred to occasionally in later criticism of the play (not surprisingly given the general paucity of lack of reference to earlier work by psychoanalytic critics), I show how three psychoanalytic critics have subsequently understood the place of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in the *Dream*: firstly Melvin Goldstein (1973) and Julius Heuscher (1989), and then a culmination of Grinstein's idea in Leon Balter (2006). The chapter briefly compares how psychoanalytic-literary criticism treats *Pyramus and Thisbe*, seen in readings by Jan Hinely (1987), Allen Dunn (1988), James Calderwood (1992) and Thomas Frosch (2007).⁵ I conclude the chapter by illustrating how psychoanalytic criticism has arrived by a different route at a similar place to some literary critics, providing confirmation of the relevance of a psychological and a literary approach to the farcical playlet; and that it is more than light relief after the more threatening elements earlier in the play.

Freud: the dream within a dream

Part of the fascination of reading Freud is that from time to time he includes an idea that deserves more consideration. What is frustrating at such points is that he says little more

³ Kanzer, 'The central theme in Shakespeare's works'; and Gui, 'Bottom's Dream'

⁴ A. Grinstein, 'The dramatic device: a play within a play', pp. 49-52.

⁵ Goldstein, 'Identity crises in a midsummer nightmare: comedy as terror in disguise'; J. E. Heuscher, 'Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 49 (1989), pp. 319-27; L. Balter, 'Nested ideation and the problem of reality: dreams and works of art in works of art' *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 75 (2006), pp. 404-45; Hinely, 'Expounding the dream'; Allen Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream wherein every mother's son rehearses his part: Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Shakespeare Studies*, 20 (1988), pp. 15-32; Calderwood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Frosch, 'The missing child', pp. 485-512.

about his idea, and the reader has to search elsewhere to see if anyone else has explored the idea further.

One such passing comment occurs in Freud's seminal text, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), where Freud briefly discusses what he calls the 'problem' of the 'dream within a dream':

I shall deal ... with the meaning and psychical significance of the judgement which often turns up in dreams expressed in the phrase 'after all this is only a dream' ... The interesting and allied problem, as to what is meant when some of the content of a dream is described in the dream itself as 'dreamt' – the enigma of the 'dream within a dream' – has been solved in a similar sense by Stekel ... The intention [of a dream within a dream] is ... to detract from the importance of what is 'dreamt' in the dream, to rob it of its reality ... To include something in a 'dream within a dream' is thus equivalent to wishing that the thing described as a dream had never happened. In other words, if a particular event is inserted into a dream as a dream ... this implies the most decided confirmation of the reality of the event – the strongest *affirmation* of it.⁶

Freud does not give any examples of this phenomenon, either from his colleague Wilhelm Stekel's book, or from his own or his patients' dreams. One of the papers that discusses Freud's comment includes a clear illustration of an inner dream within an outer dream – in order to make the distinction clear I set the inner dream in italics, the outer dream in roman type.

⁶ Freud, 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 338 (original emphasis). Most of this paragraph was added in 1911 in a later edition, with two sentences added in 1919.

I awake at the sound of a car pulling into the driveway of our Connecticut house. It is pitch dark but a child is being dropped off as if our home were a nursery school. All this seemed natural in dream experience even though the time, the darkness, would have been highly unusual for such a drop-off in real time. The scene shifts. I am now outside my house but lost, trying to find my bearings. A child on a bicycle guides me home. Then I walk from my house in Connecticut to Greenwich Village, which in dream geography seems no more than a hundred yards. I am so surprised by the spatial novelty of Connecticut's [being] a stone's throw from Greenwich Village that I wake up, an illusion, as I will discover on actual awakening. In Greenwich Village I walk into a wood-lined office in a townhouse. A bearded man, not unlike the young Freud in the Freud-Fliess era, greets me. I start to tell him the unusual dream I've just had about being lost and how it was a child who guided me home.⁷

The patient, a university professor, appears to 'wake' from a dream he is already experiencing into another dream, which starts with the car pulling up. This is the dream within a dream, or what I call, following Balter, the 'nested dream' within a 'containing dream'.⁸ At the conclusion of the dream within the dream, the nested dream, the patient describes how he again 'wakes' into a dream of being in Greenwich Village. He

⁷ Mahon, 'Dreams within dreams', p. 120 (my italics). Mahon is critical of Freud for failing to provide an example, although he sees the possibility that an example might have been too personally revealing for Freud. Nevertheless, Mahon writes, 'this sounds like dogma rather than science unless the actual clinical evidence is produced so that the reasoning behind it can be assessed' (p. 126). Mahon's article is discussed further below.

⁸ The terms are suggested by Leon Balter, whose paper is discussed below ('Nested ideation and the problem of reality', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 74 (2005), pp. 661-701). A 'nested dream' would be equivalent to Gui's core-dream; and the 'containing dream' to his 'expanded dream', described in chapter 1.

properly woke, we are told, as he started to tell ‘the unusual dream’ to the young bearded man.⁹

The nested dream illustrates Freud’s hypothesis, since it recalled a very traumatic incident in the patient’s childhood when he was abandoned by older boys who were meant to be looking after him. The nested dream contains what Freud describes as confirmation of the reality of an actual event – ‘the strongest *affirmation* of it’. It is about something that happened, and not as in many dreams about a fantasy, a wish or a fear. In many dreams such fantasies are triggered by rather insignificant events in the preceding day. In reading Gui we are constantly being presented with interpretations of what Gui believes is the latent content of Bottom’s dream, disguised in the manifest content. What Freud is saying about the nested dream is that such a disguise at the manifest level is not enough, because the memory (in this case about abandonment) evokes such strong emotions that a manifest level disguise will not work to disguise the latent memory. Since the purpose of dreams is to protect sleep, in order to preserve this patient’s sleep the painful experience has to be disguised even further. Dream-work does this by putting it into the form of a dream-within-a-dream, a nested dream, which Freud says can be dismissed even within the outer dream, as many ordinary dreams are upon waking, as ‘only a dream’. It is as if the actual event remembered and the feelings associated with it are in fact twice dismissed: it was only a dream (the dreamer thinks) within what was itself only a dream.

One of the difficulties about Freud’s thinking is that at times there appears a contradiction between two statements related to the same topic. That occurs here. Freud

⁹ The young bearded man, somewhat like a picture of the young Freud, seems to be a reflection of the patient’s analyst as an obvious follower of Freud.

would have us distrust the manifest content of a dream since it disguises latent thoughts and feelings which are much closer to the actual state of the dreamer's psyche. Yet the dream within a dream confirms the reality of an event – in other words there is no disguise. But because it is a dream the 'waking' dreamer in the containing dream dismisses the reality as 'only a dream'. So it is disguised because it is dismissed, but it is not disguised because it is closer to 'reality' than the usual manifest content of a dream. As long as we do not dismiss it as 'only a dream' (which the psychoanalyst will of course not do!) the nested dream provides a glimpse of 'reality' that is more accessible than the containing dream. It is this idea that has interesting consequences for examining Hermia's dream, and perhaps Bottom's dream, something which I believe is confirmed in later clinical papers on the dream within a dream.

The dream in a dream after Freud

Since I can find no psychoanalytic critic of the dream(s) in the *Dream* who has noticed and developed Freud's comment on the significance of the dream within a dream, I turn to a handful of clinical papers that have discussed the phenomenon in relation to patients' dreams.¹⁰ These suggest ways in which Freud's comment, that such dreams confirm the reality of experience, could apply in thinking about the dream(s) in the play. Since the discussion of the theory here is by way of a preamble to some possible interpretation of the dream(s) within the *Dream*, I very briefly summarise three long papers on the significance of the dream within a dream. In addition to discussing Freud's comment and explanation of the nested dream, they strengthen the argument for using the manifest content of fictional dreams when attempting to interpret them. I stress that the three authors are writing from a clinical perspective, and are not concerned either with

¹⁰ I bracket the 's' in 'dream(s)' since this is not the place to argue whether there is more than one – that being Hermia's dream – but to allow for the possibility.

Shakespeare or with psychoanalytic criticism. Their interest is in dreams and not plays.¹¹ It is perhaps significant that all three clinicians refer to the paper by Grinstein that I discuss below about the play within a play, whereas most psychoanalytic critics do not. They are Austin Silber (1983) and Fred Lipschitz (1990), both New York psychoanalysts, and Eugene Mahon (2002) of the Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research at Columbia University. Since the play within the play is a later discussion in this chapter, I defer discussing Grinstein for the time being, since it is not relevant to this aspect of the play, the dream within the dream.

Silber, Lipschitz and Mahon all relate examples of how the nested dream leads to memories of actual events – indeed Silber confidently writes that ‘most analysts appear to accept the “confirmatory” meaning’ of such a dream.¹² The dream signals that there is something important that needs to be uncovered, and therefore encourages further enquiry. Silber adds that nested dreams always defend against erotic desires.¹³ Both Silber and Lipschitz also draw attention to a feature in their experience of nested dreams, that following the nested dream, in the containing dream, the patient dreams of communicating the nested dream with another, as if the dreamer wants to understand what the dream is saying. The point is illustrated well by the example above, unknown to Lipschitz at the time, of the university professor, who in his containing dream meets the bearded analyst in Greenwich Village. Lipschitz also suggests that needing to tell the nested dream to another points to a deficit in waking life of a caring ‘other’.

¹¹ My own count of the number of psychoanalysts who have treated the subject of the dream within a dream, either briefly or extensively, including those referred to in this chapter, numbers 27, although it is unnecessary to discuss all 27 in order to see whether the theory has relevance for the play.

¹² Silber, ‘A significant “dream within a dream”’, p. 900.

¹³ The defence against erotic desires is not immediately obvious in the example of the professor’s dream above – but such examples never tell the whole story.

Against Lipschitz, Mahon argues that while the nested dream reveals the painful issue, the outer dream, far from trying to set it right (through telling someone), re-states the content of the inner one.¹⁴ Mahon writes, 'I will argue that a dream within a dream has two dream portions, one seemingly housed in the other, that both portions are part of one elaborate illusion, and that both can be studied profitably'.¹⁵ Mahon wonders why it should be thought that the dreamer switches subject when the dreamer 'wakes' into the containing dream. The nested dream may have touched upon something significant, if threatening, and the containing dream is another way of trying to deal with that experience. Mahon is therefore interested in his patient's dream (in the example above) of walking in Greenwich Village, since it is a continuation of the dream of being lost: 'looking at the dream as a total text, one could argue that the first part is being told again in the later dream and is therefore "within" it'.¹⁶

These refinements of Freud's position – all illustrated by dreams in a way that Freud's comment is not – have relevance for the dreams in the play. If the night in the wood is seen, as it can be, as a dream-experience, it forms the outer containing dream, in which Hermia and Bottom dream. Their dreams are therefore nested dreams. Hermia's and Bottom's dreams, as Silber says of nested dreams, ask to be taken seriously: they command attention. Again, as in Silber, both dreams are highly erotic. Hermia's dream highlights the strong erotic content of the earlier dialogue between Lysander and herself (2.2.41-70); and the scenes between Titania and Bottom, if they are indeed Bottom's dream, are clearly erotic, as Gui and many other critics suggest in writing about

¹⁴ Mahon, 'Dreams within dreams', p. 128.

¹⁵ Mahon, 'Dreams within dreams', p. 119.

¹⁶ Mahon, 'Dreams within dreams', p. 121.

Bottom's experiences with Titania.¹⁷ Although Faber is just one of many critics who observe the eroticism in Hermia's dream, he adds an explanation for Hermia waking when she does, that her dream was not protecting her from her strong desires.¹⁸ She wakes from her nested dream into the dream world of the wood.¹⁹ While it can be argued that Bottom wakes from his dream into the real world, the most erotic lines in the scenes between Titania and Bottom are when she sings the woodbine lullaby – when Bottom falls asleep within the containing dream of the preceding scenes with Titania.

Silber and Lipschitz make the same point about the need in the containing dream to tell another about the nested dream. Turn to the play and we find that Hermia immediately tries to tell Lysander of her dream of the serpent – but he is not there (HERMIA, 2.2.157-8). Bottom also needs to tell his dream to Peter Quince (4.1.211). In both Hermia and Bottom, there is a strong sense of what Lipschitz calls 'failed or non-existent interpersonal transactions'.²⁰ Both Hermia and Bottom experience the absence of those they view as their close companions: when Hermia wakes Lysander is absent, and in the containing dream he has indeed rejected her, so that soon, as she loses both Helena and (perhaps thankfully) Demetrius, she is completely alone. Egeus and Theseus have already shown no sympathy, and now none of her companions do either. And Bottom, apart from being deserted by his friends when he appears to them wearing the ass's head in his containing dream, is also portrayed both in the casting scene (Act 1:2) and in the play within the play, as someone who craves the attention of others.²¹

¹⁷ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 253.

¹⁸ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 183.

¹⁹ Faber, 'Hermia's dream', p. 186.

²⁰ Lipschitz, 'The dream within a dream', p. 718.

²¹ I am far less certain about Bottom's dream as a dream within a dream, but am pushing the envelope here to see how the idea of the dream within a dream might be applied in his case.

Hermia's dream could be dismissed by the audience, or indeed by the critic, as 'only a dream'. In fact it focuses attention on a key theme in the play – which for Faber, for example, is '*the problem of setting boundaries between male and female*', which is central to Hermia's dream.²² It is tempting to dismiss Bottom's dream as 'only a dream' as well as a 'real' series of events in the play. But if Mahon's observation about the relationship of the nested dream and the containing dream is correct, then the same overall theme is present in the nested dream – certainly in Hermia's, and arguably in Bottom's. It is also present in the containing dream, the night in the wood. Just as Faber and Holland have argued that in order to understand Hermia's dream the critic must see the dream as interpreted by the play, Mahon introduces the possibility that the nested dream and the containing dream inform each other. To interpret Hermia's dream we need to access the outer dream of the events in the wood. To interpret the scenes in the wood we need Hermia's dream – and, if dream it is, this applies to Bottom's dream too.

Given the doubt over Bottom's experience as a dream, and given that any dream he experiences in his sleep at 4.1.44 is not described upon waking, I am not convinced anything more can be usefully said about Bottom's dream in the dream wood. It is true that Bottom's experience before he goes to sleep in Titania's bower is of a sexual encounter, and that the sexual pervades the rest of the scenes of the wood, as well as being an important feature of Acts 1 and 5 in the anticipation of the consummation of the marriage on the wedding night in both Acts 1.1.1-11 and 5.1.32-7; but it does not need a dream in a dream to make such an interpretation.

Hermia's dream, however, yields real interest. Remember that Freud talks about the inner

²² Faber, 'Hermia's Dream', p. 188 (original emphasis).

nested dream as revealing more of the reality of the dreamer's waking experience. While the inner dream is less disguised, it may still be disguised to some extent. The clinical papers tend to stress the sexual anxieties within dreams – and that of course is a familiar way of looking at Hermia's dream, that it shows her anxiety about sexual intimacy. But there are several other possibilities: such as fear of being taken over by her partner (consumed by the snake at her breast), by male domination. She has escaped from her father's (and Demetrius's) clutches, but risks the same from Lysander, who is wanting his way, seeking intimacy before she is ready. Suppose this theme is extended to the dream wood: Titania fearing Oberon's domination; or Helena experiencing herself as a plaything for Lysander and Demetrius. And these 'dreams', nested and containing, reflect not just Hermia's situation in Act 1, but also Hippolyta's anxiety that having been 'won' by Theseus, he will now dominate.

Another possibility is that the nested dream reveals fear of rejection: there is much rejection in the wood – Hermia rejected by Lysander and Demetrius, Oberon rejected by Titania, Bottom rejected by Titania – all part of the containing dream. Both nested dream and containing dream reflect Hippolyta's (unexpressed) rejection of Theseus as her future husband, whom she is forced to marry because he has won her (THESEUS, 1.1.16-17); and Hermia's wish to reject her father and Demetrius; and Helena's rejection by Demetrius before the play begins; and the artisans' fear of the rejection of their offering to the Duke.

None of these are, however, satisfying enough as interpretations of the 'reality' of the nested dream and the containing dream wood. There is a third much more interesting possibility. Attention should be paid to the serpent, not just as a phallic symbol, but as a symbol of the tempting serpent in the Garden of Eden. What is particularly interesting

about the tempting serpent is the deceptive promise in the words: 'In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes will be opened, and ye shall be as gods' (*Genesis* 3.5). The scenes in the dream wood are full of deception, particularly the deception caused by the love-juice applied to the eyes of Lysander, Demetrius and Titania; and when their eyes are next opened they are being deceived in their passionate love for the person they first see. Oberon and Puck have set up this deception, which to some extent goes badly wrong, and has to be unscrambled with an antidote. The love-juice results in the deceptiveness of love at first sight. Hermia too accuses Demetrius of having a double-tongue, deceiving her as to what he has done with Lysander (3.2.72); while Helena is certain that the two men are plotting against her (3.2.160), and that Hermia too is part of their 'confederacy' (3.2.192).

So there is a dream (Hermia's) within a dream (the wood that midsummer's night) where both nested dream and containing dream throw light upon each other. But more than that. The dream within the dream expresses the deception in the day residue of Act 1 – the deception that Lysander plans with Hermia, for her to steal away from her father's house and meet in the wood (LYSANDER, 1.1.164-5). Helena also has her own deceptive plan, to give Lysander's and Hermia's plan away to Demetrius so that he will follow them: but her real wish is that this will curry favour with Demetrius, and, I suspect, give her the opportunity to pursue him and throw herself upon him in the wood.

Furthermore, if Calderwood's suggestion is accepted, that Oberon and Titania represent characters in Theseus's dream, then the relationship of Oberon and Titania represents a more troubled relationship than Theseus consciously believes he has with Hippolyta – he is deceived by her silence during his harsh treatment of Hermia, thinking she has

acquiesced in his ruling.²³ Whether or not that line of argument is followed, Theseus certainly believes in his speech in Act 5.1.22-3 that the lovers have been deceived by the tricks of their strong imaginations (THESEUS, 5.1.18).

Finally, there is the argument from Puck's epilogue that the whole play is a dream, a series of deceptive visions (PUCK, 5.1.417-19). A common theme of deception therefore runs through different layers of a play that Goldstein says 'can be considered a dream within a dream within a dream within a dream'.²⁴ I find support for my reading of the dream within the dream/*Dream* in Marjorie Garber's statement that 'the question of duplicity ... is central to the concerns of the play'.²⁵

Of course this is speculation. I do not contend that this is what Shakespeare planned. There are no other examples in the canon of a dream within a dream that might enable the theory of the significance of the dream within a dream to be tested further. There are plenty of examples of single layered dreams, but they are not the same. Nor is it easy to find other examples in literature generally of dreams within dreams. The significance of the dream within a dream in clinical practice is not therefore readily transferable to literary criticism. But I suggest that the interpretation of Hermia's dream is even fuller when it is recognised as a good (if isolated) example of the phenomenon.

My suggestions of the dream within a dream are not reflected in psychoanalytic criticism of the play, except perhaps in Gui's division of Bottom's dream into a core dream and

²³ Calderwood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pp. 53-4.

²⁴ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 179. He explains: firstly, the play is a dream because 'it is an artistic creation'; secondly, because that is what it is called (presumably in its title but also in Puck's epilogue); thirdly, 'the realistic aspects of the play have the characteristics of a dream'; and fourthly, the scenes in the wood are a 'giant dream replete with the smaller dreams of individual characters'.

²⁵ Garber, *Dream in Shakespeare*, p. 73.

expanded dream material. ‘Core dream’ and ‘expanded dream’ seem very similar to a dream within a dream – and each dream in Gui’s exposition throws light upon the other. It seems that Gui did not know about Freud’s dream within a dream, otherwise he might have used the idea to support his argument. Nevertheless, what some psychoanalytic criticism has done is to extend the significance Freud accords to ‘the dream within a dream’ to ‘the play within a play’, and apply this parallel to *Pyramus and Thisbe* in the *Dream*. It is this parallel which the rest of this chapter explores.

From a dream in a dream to the play in the play

If Freud’s comment upon the dream within a dream is a tantalising suggestion that has been left to others to pursue in greater detail, the same could be said of a footnote, a mere aside, that appears in Ernest Jones’s 1949 book *Hamlet and Oedipus*. Picking up on Freud’s reference to the dream within a dream he made a bold and unsubstantiated connection to the play within a play.

There is a delicate point here that may appeal only to psychoanalysts. It is known that the occurrence of a dream within a dream ... is always found when analyzed to refer to a theme which the person wishes were ‘only a dream’, i.e. not true. I would suggest that a similar meaning attaches to a ‘play within a play’, as in ‘Hamlet’. So Hamlet (as nephew) can kill the King in his imagination since it is ‘only a play’ or ‘only in play’.²⁶

Jones’s point is that what makes it difficult for Hamlet to kill Claudius is that Claudius has

²⁶ Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus*, p. 89n. British contributions on this subject are otherwise almost non-existent. In a later article on psychotherapy and theatre written by a British psychoanalyst, J. R. Pedder tosses in the thought that the play within a play is more like a dream (‘The role of space and location in psychotherapy, play and theatre’, *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 4 (1977), pp. 220-1). *Hamlet* is the focus of that part of his article, and his idea of the play within a play being like a dream takes us no further on the significance of the play in the *Dream*. It does however lend some support to Gui’s treatment of the play within the play, discussed below, as an extension of Bottom’s dream.

enacted Hamlet's repressed fantasy wish to kill his father and have an incestuous relationship with his mother. By himself witnessing the play as 'only a play', where there is no reference to adultery or incest, Hamlet can fulfill his task of revenge in his imagination. Jones does not make any more of his footnote and he does not refer to any other play, although there are several examples in Shakespeare where a performance of a kind takes place within the main play. *Pyramus and Thisbe* in the *Dream* is however the closest example of an actual play within a play to *The Mousetrap* in Hamlet.²⁷

It was seven years before Jones's footnote attracted the interest of Alexander Grinstein. In the intervening period there are two psychoanalytic critics, Mark Kanzer (1951) and Weston Gui (1952), who write rather differently about the place of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in the whole play, although neither make any reference to Jones's footnote.

Kanzer, an American psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, refers to a number of Shakespeare's plays where the inner play occurs, including the 'device' whereby Bottom and the other tradesmen play before Theseus. *Pyramus and Thisbe* represents a comic flip-side to the more anxious, even aggressive aspect of the relationship between Theseus and Hippolyta, the latter 'conquered first in battle and then in love'. He comments: 'In the portrayal of the troubles of Pyramus and Thisbe, we are obviously witnessing a hilarious account of the wedding night'.²⁸ Laughing at Bottom's performance enables anxiety about the wedding night to be disowned.

I have previously summarised the fourth section of Gui's 1952 article, which sees the

²⁷ Other examples in Shakespeare are in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Love Labour's Lost*, with perhaps the masque in *The Tempest* as another possibility.

²⁸ Kanzer, 'The central theme in Shakespeare's works', p. 13.

play within the play as an extension of the interpretation of Bottom's dream.²⁹ The play takes place in Bottom's waking state, distinguishing it from the core dream and the expanded dream; but Gui links it to the casting scene in Act 1, Scene 2. For the most part this section reinforces Gui's arguments about the primal scene, castration anxiety and the other interpretations that Gui has adduced from the scenes in the wood. Gui continues to stretch the meaning of various elements in the play, such as the blood stains on Thisbe's mantle, representing 'the telltale stain of menstrual blood in the mother's bed'.³⁰

The playlet is turned into a farce, Gui thinks, in an attempt to remove its traumatising elements. This is also noted in much literary criticism, that the farce serves the purpose of lightening the more serious (if also somewhat farcical) plot of the conflict between the couples in the wood. Gui's argument is rather more sophisticated, predicating that making a serious play into a farce is all Bottom's doing. He may have some grounds for thinking that from Bottom's comments in the casting scene where he wishes to re-write the script. Gui's assumption is that the original script as Quince wrote it was a serious treatment of an oedipal theme – with a father and a mother represented on stage, although the later script's omission of parental figures could as well as have been Quince's alteration rather than Bottom's. Yet Gui is right that the script also has to be made harmless, like the concern about the lion frightening the ladies of the court. The love scene between Pyramus and Thisbe is toned down 'thru Bottom's re-writing'.³¹ It is difficult to see what leads Gui to this assumption unless it is the implied doubt in Thisbe's line 'Thou art my love, *I think*' (FLUTE, 5.1.193 – my emphasis). Gui appears

²⁹ See chapter 1; 'Gui, Bottom's dream', pp. 279-93.

³⁰ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 280.

³¹ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 287.

to consider this and Pyramus's reply about 'thy lover' to mean that Thisbe is still in love with her father. Such an interpretation heightens Gui's oedipal interpretation of the play.

There is however no evidence to support the claim that Bottom has re-written the script, or that it is Bottom's re-write that turns it from a serious play to a farce. There is only the phrase 'tragical mirth' that might support such a view. Against Gui's suggestion the evidence is rather that the artisans know they are staging a serious play, hence their anxiety about being too realistic and frightening the ladies (QUINCE, 1.2.67-9). If it becomes a farce it is their final performance that makes it so.

The play within the play is interrupted both by mocking remarks from the men of the court, and by Bottom's responses to Theseus. I have previously referred to the interchange between Theseus and Bottom in Gui's interpretation as an attempt to resolve the oedipal conflict. Gui thinks that when Pyramus curses the wall, Theseus 'immediately recognizes the meaning of this as an anger outburst against himself', in reply to which Bottom has to step out of role to 'make a frightened plea toward the throne of the duke'.³² Theseus's interjection is 'The wall, being sensible, should curse again' (5.1.180). Yet this does not mean that Theseus is offended, but that the Wall might be offended, having feelings, and may want to curse back. Gui assumes that Theseus's interjection is a projection of his own hurt feelings. This is another of Gui's misreadings of the text.

Gui's observation of a reciprocal relationship between Bottom and Theseus is an interesting one. I prefer to view it as a paternalistic rather than a paternal one.

³² Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 288.

Gui states that Theseus's 'paternal gentleness and affection' may have been apparent during Bottom's performance, but as soon as it is over, he steps back into his original character.

Gui tries to use the play in the play as a resolution in psychoanalytic terms of the issues that have been raised in his interpretations of the previous scenes in the play. I do not believe this works, partly because he contradicts himself as to whether there is in fact any such resolution. But given that Gui wishes to integrate the playlet into the whole play his concentration upon Bottom in the *Pyramus and Thisbe* play is to be expected, since every aspect of his exhaustive interpretation revolves around Bottom and his dream. Gui has argued that Shakespeare has identified himself with Bottom, making Bottom such a rich character. My own view is that it is Gui, rather than Shakespeare, who has over-identified with the character Bottom. Like Bottom the actor, Gui overdoes it. Furthermore although he assumes Bottom re-writes the play, it appears more likely that it is Gui who re-writes the script.

A dream in a dream: the play in the play: Alexander Grinstein (1956)

One of the features of psychoanalytic criticism that is clear from its treatment of the *Dream* is that it happens in a piecemeal way. There is little continuity; there are few occasions when a later critic picks up an idea about the play and develops it. There is therefore little development of a suggested theory or interpretation. Neither Kanzer nor Gui is aware of the Jones footnote, or of the possibility of exploiting the dream within a dream phenomenon. While Grinstein does pick up and run with Jones's footnote, few psychoanalytic critics have noticed, let alone taken further, his proposal of the parallel between a dream in a dream and a play in a play.

Grinstein was an important figure in the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute for over 50 years, and a prolific writer and researcher. While his name occurs many times in psychoanalytic literature, these are references to his book on Freud's dreams, and for articles on other works of literature, and not his discussion of the play within the play. Only one author, Leon Balter, refers generously to Grinstein when he discusses similar examples in the arts.³³ And whereas Gui gets a few brief mentions by literary critics, Grinstein's name appears to be unknown to them.

Ernest Jones makes no reference to the *Dream*, but the significance of his comment on *The Mousetrap* can be seen in that Grinstein sets out Jones's footnote in full in a footnote of his own.³⁴ He starts by suggesting, like Jones, that if dreams within a dream have particular significance for the dreamer, then the play within a play may have similar significance for the drama that contains it. Despite the brevity of his discussion, his paper could have been relevant to later psychoanalytic critics discussing the play within the play, where it is a common opinion that *Pyramus and Thisbe* is an integral part of the play, because of its parallel plot of two lovers, forbidden to marry, meeting in a wood.

The play Hamlet stages before Claudius and the Danish court is the focus of Grinstein's argument, where he spells out (in a way Jones does not) how he sees that device working. After his exposition of *The Mousetrap* he refers to the *Dream* as similarly containing an example of a play within a play. He does not discuss it any further, but immediately

³³ See below.

³⁴ Grinstein, 'The dramatic device: a play within a play', p. 51n.

summarises his hypothesis in his final paragraph, which given the brevity of his argument, I set out in full:

The dream within a dream deals with a historical reality in the life history of the dreamer; the play within the play represents something that has happened or *will happen* in the life history of one or more of the characters of the play. The dream within a dream usually deals with a reality *event* in the life of the dreamer which the dreamer wishes had never happened, which he wishes were really not so. The play within the play, too, deals with reality events, as well as with *psychic* reality, including basic conflicts or problems of the hero, or, whoever, in the play, represents an important facet of his personality. These conflicts, being intolerable to part of the ego, are those with which the hero wishes he were not compelled to struggle, which he, like the dreamer, wishes were really not so. Dealing with the material in this manner serves to prepare the audience emotionally for what is to happen in the resolution of the conflicts presented in the play and thus helps them participate more fully in the play itself.³⁵

What Grinstein suggests, without actually relating *Pyramus and Thisbe* to the main text, is that the nested play is dealing with reality events, disguised as a different story. Additionally the nested play relates to the experience of one or more of the characters in ‘reality’; and not just to experiences that have happened, but to experiences that are yet to occur. Grinstein understands the reference to the nephew Lucianus, who kills the king in the play within the play, also to suggest that Hamlet as Claudius’s nephew will kill the

³⁵ Grinstein, ‘The dramatic device: a play within a play’, p. 52 (his emphasis).

king. Therefore *The Mousetrap* looks forward, that is to Claudius's death at the hands of his nephew, as it alludes to the past and Claudius supposedly killing Hamlet's father.

What is particularly striking is Grinstein's emphasis on what '*will happen*'. The nested play, being both a tragedy but also a comedy ('very tragical mirth') suggests that the containing play also has tragic and comic elements.³⁶ While the mechanicals' play in both psychoanalytic and literary criticism does reflect the scenes in the wood, it can also be understood as representing the present as well as anticipating the future of the marriages being celebrated in Act 5, an aspect that literary critics do not appear to observe in relation to the play within the play.³⁷ In the present, Hippolyta may not have been conquered quite so easily as Theseus imagines. In respect of the future the psychoanalytic-literary critics Calderwood or Frosch observe that the tragic outcome of Theseus's and Hippolyta's marriage is their son Hippolytus, perhaps conceived that wedding night.³⁸ There is an interesting question as to why Theseus chose this particular offering of the four presented to him to pass the time on his wedding evening. A psychoanalytic critic might want to suggest that it is an unconscious choice of a play that suggests he is drawn towards what Grinstein calls his own 'basic conflicts and problems'.³⁹

³⁶ This idea is one that Melvin Goldstein proposes in his 1973 paper, 'Identity crises', which I discuss more fully in Chapter 3. Goldstein knows Grinstein's book on Freud's own dreams, since he refers to it in a footnote, but does not appear to know of the paper under discussion here.

³⁷ Several literary critics discuss the future of the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta, and the story of Hippolytus their son, but do not link it to the tragic element of *Pyramus and Thisbe*.

³⁸ Referred to only briefly by Calderwood (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 5) as a tragic figure whose story would be known to Shakespeare. Frosch ('The missing child', p. 503) makes rather more of the significance of Hippolytus: 'Theseus reverted to his old ways, discarded Hippolyta, and married Phaedra, who fell in love with Hippolytus and accused him of rape when he rejected her. The blessed child was cursed by his father and killed by that curse. It would be hard to imagine a more nightmarish future for characters who are supposed to live happily ever after'.

³⁹ Grinstein, 'The dramatic device: a play within a play', p. 52. It is Goldstein who wonders (as do a number of literary critics) why Theseus chose this offering rather than the other three suggested to him, as I observe below ('Identity crises', p. 193).

Theseus and Hippolyta are scarcely parallel characters to Pyramus and Thisbe. The more obvious parallel, frequently referred to in literary criticism, is that of Lysander and Hermia – their marriage forbidden by the father, their plan to run away to the wood, and the dangers that they encounter there. Their dangers may not be as extreme as Thisbe's. Although the lion does not kill her, but simply frightens her, the effect of the love-juice on Lysander is to turn him into a metaphorical beast that frightens Hermia – as does her dream of the serpent.

It is the clinician Silber's opinion that the nested dream conceals erotic desires, and that it is therefore a stimulus in psychoanalytic therapy to sexual exploration of the patient's fantasies.⁴⁰ If this is true of the dream in a dream, the same point can be made about the play in the play. Might the nested play relate to Bottom, and to the frustration of his sexual desires? Gui indeed relates Bottom's relationship with Theseus, seen in the performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, to what he takes to be Bottom's fantasy, a sequence of events that includes much of the play that precedes Act 5. Alternatively, while *Pyramus and Thisbe* can clearly be read as a device that seeks to ease the anxieties and fantasies of the audience about what has been happening in the wood and in the relations between the four pairs of lovers, the sexual double entendres in the nested play suggest a stimulus to sexual exploration, one which will come later (offstage) in the bridal chambers. Here again the nested play points forward as well as back.

These are some of the possibilities opened up by Grinstein's theory that the play within a play contains parallels to what has happened or what will happen to one or more of the characters. Grinstein argues convincingly that *The Mousetrap* is an integral part of

⁴⁰ Silber, 'A significant "dream within a dream"', p. 900. See above for my discussion of Silber.

Hamlet, and that it points forward as well as back. His failure to follow through his linking of the *Dream* to *Hamlet* misses the opportunity to strengthen his argument for the nested play's significance. To convince the reader that what applies to *The Mousetrap* also applies to *Pyramus and Thisbe* (or indeed to other instances of plays within plays that he does not list) Grinstein needed to illustrate, in ways such as I attempt here, how his argument applies. He makes a convincing case for *The Mousetrap* pointing forward as well as back, but the suggestion that the nested play in the *Dream* also points forward is never substantiated. He leaves his reader to take his inclusion of the *Dream* on trust. Nevertheless, other critics, psychoanalytic and literary, in their own writing on *Pyramus and Thisbe* lend support to Grinstein's view that the 'nested play' reflects the 'reality' of the containing play, that the playlet does more than lighten the mood of the whole drama, and that it is more than a parody of other plays that Shakespeare might have witnessed.

It is an axiom of psychoanalysis that anything that is said or written may come from an unintended allusion to a significant though unconscious idea, and that can apply as much to *Pyramus and Thisbe* as to a joke or a Freudian slip. Psychoanalytic criticism would therefore expect the playlet to reveal more about the play as a whole. It must be significant, more than a mere whim on the part of the playwright. Freud's original description of the dream within a dream might therefore be adapted in support of that axiom to read as follows:

It is safe to suppose, therefore, that what has been "played" in the play is a representation of the reality ... if a particular event is inserted into a play as a play within the play ... this implies the most decided confirmation of the reality of the

event – the strongest *affirmation* of it.⁴¹

If the play within a play hypothesis is followed, then there is a remarkable shift in the way the play as a whole might be understood. There is a parallel here with Mervyn Faber and Norman Holland stressing that Hermia's dream had to be interpreted within the context of the whole. It is to the whole play that the psychoanalytic critic needs to refer in order to understand that one small part of it. I have suggested above a slight change of emphasis on their argument: that it is by considering the *mutual* relationship between Hermia's dream and the dream play that other ways of reflecting on the play as a whole become possible. The Grinstein thesis is different again: that it is the nested play – *Pyramus and Thisbe* – that shows the 'reality' that is disguised in the rest of the play. Critically analyse *Pyramus and Thisbe* and the critic has the key to unlock *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

***Pyramus and Thisbe*: psychoanalytic interpretations after Grinstein**

Although Grinstein's novel theory is scarcely noticed by later psychoanalytic critics who write about *Pyramus and Thisbe*, there is much that is common in their writing on the artisans' play that relates implicitly to Grinstein's theory. There is the general acceptance that *Pyramus and Thisbe* is closely linked to the themes of the containing play: that it reminds the audience – both in Theseus's court and in the theatre itself – of the different fateful encounters that have taken place in the fairy wood; that it satirises the more challenging aspects of love relationships, highlighting that what has taken place in the history of the four couples can happen between couples in reality. There is also some recognition that although the play appears to end, like a fairy-tale, 'happily ever after', it has

⁴¹ This is my own adaptation of the quotation above from Freud, 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 338.

shown what may yet take place in the lives of the various couples.

What is missing from psychoanalytic criticism of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, but which is apparent in some literary criticism, is reference outside the *Dream* to the more serious but parallel plot in *Romeo and Juliet*, a play written at a similar time, probably just before the *Dream*. Add *Romeo and Juliet* to the mix, alongside the stories of love in other Shakespearean comedies, as Thomas MacCary does, and there is a more complete picture of the vicissitudes of love and desire in Shakespeare.⁴² A critical understanding of the play from a psychoanalytical perspective may need to foreground the artisans' play; but a wider critical perspective suggests that, given the important place of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in the *Dream* and that it is a microcosmic reworking of *Romeo and Juliet*, then that other more obviously tragic drama could throw light upon both the nested and containing plays. Yet I find only three psychoanalytic articles on the *Dream* that as much as mention *Romeo and Juliet*, and only two of those briefly link *Pyramus and Thisbe* to the earlier play. Formalist criticism may not be interested in studying any more than the text, but the psychoanalytic method requires examination of the circumstances that might have given rise to a dream or to a particular behaviour. It might therefore be expected that given the similar theme in *Romeo and Juliet* and in *Pyramus and Thisbe* that psychoanalytic critics would have paid more attention to it.

The artisans' play is treated by three American psychoanalytic critics after Grinstein:

Melvin Goldstein (1973), Julius Heuscher (1989) and Leon Balter (2006), but it is only Balter who explicitly adopts Grinstein's analysis of the play within a play.⁴³ Of the two

⁴² Thomas MacCary, *Friends and Lovers: The Phenomenology of Desire in Shakespearean Comedy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). The theme of love is the subject of Chapter 4.

⁴³ Balter, 'Dreams and works of art in works of art', pp. 404-45.

others Heuscher might be said to illustrate an aspect of Grinstein's argument, that there is an intimate relationship between the 'nested play' and the containing play, but he does not actually refer to him.

While Goldstein writes about the play within the play, the focus of his article is different, since he is more interested in the identity crises experienced by the artisans (and to some extent by Theseus watching the play).⁴⁴ Nevertheless Goldstein gives a pertinent answer to the question of why Theseus chose *Pyramus and Thisbe* from the four entertainments offered to him. He provides reasons why the other three might not have been suitable; but the artisans' play

contains all of the themes of the play which preceded it and some of the inconclusiveness with which *AMND* ends ... In the main, the scene is a dramatic re-enactment in reality of the earlier nightmares experienced by the lovers and of the problems which the other characters in the play have sought to solve.⁴⁵

The nightmarish experiences of the lovers ('their respective love affairs might well have ended in death'⁴⁶) are drawn together in the play within the play *Pyramus and Thisbe*.

Nevertheless Goldstein's main concern is the way in which the artisans have to take on roles with which they do not feel comfortable. For example, for Flute, in being asked to play a woman, Thisbe, 'is hard on an adolescent boy's developing manhood'.⁴⁷ Bottom cannot make his mind up which role he wants. Goldstein also devotes a few paragraphs to the sexual innuendoes in the playlet; and he reflects on Theseus's responses to the performance as it proceeds. In a valuable discussion of the play and the play within the play Goldstein

⁴⁴ These identity crises are discussed fully in Chapter 3.

⁴⁵ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 193.

⁴⁶ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 193.

⁴⁷ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 181.

makes a strong link between the two, although it is more in the nature of the identity crises that involve both the characters at court, and the artisans.⁴⁸

Julius Heuscher (1989), an American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, was an author with an interest in folklore, myths and fairy tales. It is scarcely surprising that he turns his attention therefore to what he describes as ‘the lively and rich phantasmagoria of this fairy-tale-play [which] proves to be intellectually and emotionally most rewarding’.⁴⁹ He cites no other psychoanalytic or literary criticism, but he sees *Pyramus and Thisbe* as replicating the situation that triggers off the whole play – Egeus keeping his daughter away from Lysander. Both the inner and outer play show ‘the deadly effects of parental possessiveness as well as of being so blindly in love that one rejects a life without the beloved’.⁵⁰ Like Gui, he notes that Wall and Moonshine are played by the two men who originally were cast as parental figures in the play, although he falls short of making the type of interpretations Gui makes, only hinting that this ‘might lead to some interesting symbolic interpretations’.⁵¹ What a pity he does not chance making some!

What is nevertheless interesting is what Heuscher writes about the play performed by the artisans. Although he provides no evidence to confirm he was aware of Freud’s comment on the dream within a dream, or Grinstead’s play within a play, Heuscher is remarkably close to both earlier writers in this paragraph, where he sees the play as offering both the onstage and the theatre’s spectators

an opportunity to defuse excessive anxieties that might have been aroused by the main play’s oedipal conflicts: The play, he [Shakespeare] seems to tell us reassuringly, is

⁴⁸ I examine this aspect in greater detail in Chapter 3.

⁴⁹ Heuscher, ‘Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch’, p. 319. His article, focusing on the oedipal theme in the *Dream* is considered in more detail in chapter 3.

⁵⁰ Heuscher, ‘Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch’ p. 326.

⁵¹ Heuscher, ‘Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch’ p. 326.

but a dream; it is something you can laugh about, it *is* just a play ... The play, as well as the play within the play, on the one hand, has a cathartic-therapeutic effect by offering a view of various existential realms. On the other hand, it makes available denials and rationalizations that protect the spectator from overwhelming insights. Optimum growth consists of an alternation of new insights and repression.⁵²

‘It *is* just a play’ has the ring of Freud’s ‘It’s only a dream’. Heuscher’s conclusion supports the general thrust of psychoanalytic interpretations of comedy as both giving expression to the reality of a psychological system, but at the same time denying it.⁵³

Although Heuscher comes close to Grinstein’s sketchy analysis of the play within the play in his interpretation of its significance, it is not until 2006 that Grinstein is actually referred to by name in psychoanalytic criticism, in the second of two articles by Leon Balter, an American clinical professor and psychoanalyst.⁵⁴ It is he who introduces the useful term ‘nested’ to denote a dream that appears in a dream, and he extends the principle of ‘nested’ and ‘containing’ objects to works of art within art, as well as plays within plays.⁵⁵

Balter’s hypothesis, stated at the start of his first article (2005), and carried over into the second, is that:

⁵² Heuscher, ‘Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch’, pp. 326-7.

⁵³ I examine this further in Chapter 3.

⁵⁴ The first article, noted earlier, is, ‘Nested ideation and the problem of reality’, pp. 661-702; the second is similar adding a sub-title: ‘Nested ideation and the problem of reality: dreams and works of art in works of art’, pp. 404-45.

⁵⁵ Apparently unaware of Balter’s work, although using the same term ‘nested’, and referring to Grinstein as well, Hilary Hoge extends the trope to books within books as well as plays within plays. She refers to *Hamlet*, presumably taking Grinstein’s lead, but she makes no reference to the *Dream* (‘Dreams within dreams; books within books’, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 18 (2008), pp. 1-26). She too argues that the ‘inner’ represents a reality that has to be understood in the context of the ‘outer’. She illustrates her argument by reference to paintings within paintings, just as Balter does, with Vermeer as an example; and she instances Ian McEwan as using the device of a book within a book.

- (1) *Nested dreams and works of art in dreams bespeak the maneuver of attempted denial of unpleasant reality represented in some way in the nested dream elements.*
- (2) *Opposite orientations toward the reality of the nested contents (denying and affirming) would coexist, with varying proportions of validity in different instances.*
- (3) *The problem of reality (i.e., the problem of deciding what is real or true) would be closely associated with nested dreams or works of art in dreams.*⁵⁶

Applied to the nested play, this hypothesis suggests that, like the nested dream in Freud's opinion, it both denies but also affirms 'reality'. The nested play has a function that is similar to the post-drama jig – in the case of the *Dream* the reference to Bottom and Thisbe dancing at 5.1.353. Also known as a bergomask the jig is described by the New York psychoanalyst Kurt Eissler: '... at the end of the play the audience needed a period of transition, in order for it to be released from tragic reality and find its way back to actual reality ... the jig would have constituted a sort of *rite de passage*'.⁵⁷ Balter recognises, following Grinstein on the nested play, that if the play denies the reality of what may prove to be shaky marriages, or skates over anxieties about the coming wedding night, the nested play also needs to be unpacked because it contains within it the reality beneath the denial. Balter also supports Grinstein's opinion that the nested play portrays a reality that is relevant to the play as a whole.

Balter pursues his argument with an illustration from the *Dream*. Here at last the reason why Grinstein includes the *Dream* in his article is given some substance. According to

⁵⁶ Balter, 'Nested ideation and the problem of reality', p. 665 (original emphasis).

⁵⁷ K. R. Eissler, 'Fortinbras and Hamlet', *American Imago*, 25 (1968), p. 220. Eissler's main interest is *Hamlet*, but this is an example from the *Dream* of Shakespeare's way of lowering tension, referring to an opinion that actors at the time of Shakespeare would have worked up their audience more than a contemporary cast does.

Balter the ‘nested’ play deals with ‘reality – and unadulterated aggression’.⁵⁸ It is about two lovers one of whom believes the other has been killed by a wild beast, leading to both lovers killing themselves. They misunderstand what has happened. Therefore this nested play deals with the problem which is central to the whole play – that of misunderstood reality. Furthermore the aggression in the nested play parallels the hostility between each of the four couples in the main play, including Theseus and Hippolyta who had been warring before the play opens. Balter does not make the observation, perhaps because there is no textual evidence, but in the first scene the possible tension between Theseus and Hippolyta has been clearly portrayed in productions of the play.⁵⁹ The doubling of the actors, who take the roles of Theseus and Oberon and Hippolyta and Titania, also enacts the point made by a number of literary critics that the feud between Oberon and Titania, explicit at their first appearance, reflects the tension between Theseus and Hippolyta.⁶⁰

As Balter shows, the aggression in the nested play is seen *par excellence* in the four lovers who

manifest the inane sexual flightiness, fickleness, and rivalrous hostility of adolescents – emotional storms that, after a night's sleep, pass and are forgotten. These antagonisms, set side by side with their reconciliations, are a reiterated antithetical theme throughout *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the containing play.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Balter, ‘Dreams and works of art in works of art’, p. 418.

⁵⁹ The 2013 Globe production is one of several productions that make this clear when Hippolyta turns away from Theseus at various points in his treatment of Hermia, as if she disagrees with his judgement. It is also seen in Adrian Noble’s 2001 film of his stage production where Hippolyta slaps Theseus on the face as she leaves the room in the first scene (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* [DVD] (United Kingdom: Channel 4, 2001)). Even earlier, in Max Reinhardt’s 1935 film (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, [Korean DVD]) Hippolyta does not look at all happy in the first scene.

⁶⁰ As in Calderwood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pp. 53-4.

⁶¹ Balter, ‘Dreams and works of art in works of art’, pp. 418-9.

The containing play is therefore one that raises the problem of reality, with its ‘completely unseen and unknown world of sprites, capriciously and maliciously inducing the naive and oblivious young humans to squabble and fight’.⁶² Bottom is the only mortal to directly encounter the fairy world, but he cannot accept that world as real, saying, as Balter a little misleadingly cites, ‘Methought I was – [an ass]!’ (4.1.204).⁶³ Bottom denies the reality of his experience by reducing it to ‘*only a dream*’ – Freud’s phrase returns yet again. Balter here provides a similar interpretation to Gui, although in Gui it is that Bottom is *unable* to look deeper into his dream (rather than dismisses it) because of what ‘reality’ it might reveal.

I introduced earlier the phrase ‘a dream within a dream within a dream’. It is intriguing that Balter takes his nested/containing theory a stage further, so that, as in a set of Russian dolls (not his image), his theory ventures to include this same denial of reality. Puck encourages it in the epilogue, where even the containing play itself becomes a nested, subordinate play ... Puck tells the audience that if they did not like *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, they have merely to invoke the problem of reality and deny its very existence, by affirming (like Bottom), ‘It was *only* a dream!’ *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* thus becomes a *nested dream within a play* – that is, within Puck’s play.⁶⁴

Although the play has a consistent yet simple theme Balter suggests that the whole play has a ‘very complex dramatic structure’, meaning that

romantic love should *not* result in death and destruction, as is the case in the nested

⁶² Balter, ‘Dreams and works of art in works of art’, p. 419.

⁶³ The text is ‘Methought I was – there is no man can tell that’.

⁶⁴ Balter, ‘Dreams and works of art in works of art’, p. 419-20 (original emphasis).

play. Aggression between romantic lovers should be denied – nested in a ludicrous play, and also blamed on unseen and unknown fairies. Hostility in love should be settled with mutual fulfillment.⁶⁵

In other words, the comedy disguises the reality of love: that it is prone to rivalry and aggression. Balter's second principle in his hypothesis holds true, that the nested play of *Pyramus and Thisbe* both *reveals*, yet because of its ludicrousness also *denies*, the aggression between the four pairs of lovers. Balter describes this as 'the blatant cynicism of the play', and claims that 'the aggression inherent in romantic love is denied through a fantasy ... *a fairy tale* with its obligatory happy ending'.⁶⁶ The play may be 'extremely charming' but:

[it] invokes a very flimsy defensive fantasy denying the well-known illusions, delusions, heartaches, and hostilities attendant upon romantic love – the very content of the nested play. The containing play laughingly asserts about the awful, painful reality inherent in that nested play: 'It's *only* a play!'⁶⁷

Balter believes that nested dreams and nested works of art which both reveal yet also deny painful reality are 'partially successful and partially unsuccessful' as a defence.⁶⁸ Indeed, depending on the production, many audiences would probably see the last act of the *Dream* as resolving earlier tensions, with its reconciled lovers, including Oberon and Titania, and its farcical little play. This suggests that the last act is rather a successful defence; but for those for whom it is not, Puck virtually says, it's only a dream; it's only a play (5.1.414-29).

⁶⁵ Balter, 'Dreams and works of art in works of art', p. 420 (original emphasis).

⁶⁶ Balter, 'Dreams and works of art in works of art', p. 420 (original emphasis).

⁶⁷ Balter, 'Dreams and works of art in works of art', p. 420 (original emphasis).

⁶⁸ Balter, 'Dreams and works of art in works of art', p. 432.

It may have taken fifty years, but Balter provides the most extensive treatment of Grinstein's idea, which he relates to the *Dream* and to *Pyramus and Thisbe* within it. Unlike many psychoanalytic critics he includes an extensive bibliography, referencing Shakespeare's plays and some films, but otherwise he only includes psychoanalytic publications. Like so many of the psychoanalytic critics in this thesis, he shows no evidence of having read any of the literary critics who have discussed either *Pyramus and Thisbe* or the play itself. Apart from supporting and extending Grinstein's article, what Balter also does, to anticipate my next chapter, is provide evidence to support Goldstein's theory that comedy itself both reveals and denies, so that, as in *Pyramus and Thisbe*, an anxious and dangerous situation is turned into humour and farce.

Balter therefore completes what Jones had started by referring to the play in a play as equivalent to the dream in a dream. He provides the type of interpretation of the play that I have played with above in relation to the dream within the dream/*Dream*. His is a more substantial exposition of a theory, which in Grinstein remained just a theory in relation to the *Dream*. Although psychoanalytic-literary critics and literary critics readily note the *denial* (through its humour) of the tensions that had previously been seen in the relationships between and across the various couples, Balter spells out more clearly than any of them that *Pyramus and Thisbe* has a second important function, that of revealing them.

Psychoanalysis believes denial is one form of psychological defence, and that the stronger the denial, the more truth there is in what is being denied – 'the lady doth protest too much, methinks' (*Hamlet*, GERTRUDE, 3.2. 225). Therefore if a dream within a dream, or a play within a play, reveals (as much as it denies) a particular reality, what

psychoanalytic criticism suggests is that this is a double representation of reality. The denial reveals as much as is obviously revealed. But what if there is a genuine denial, or as in the case of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, what if the play within the play is indeed pure entertainment such as may have taken place at any wedding celebration? Balter makes it clear that his theory of the nested object within the larger whole, representing both reality and the denial of it, does not apply to 'just *any* sort of nested ideational mental content (besides dreams) or nested ideational communicative vehicles (besides works of art)'.⁶⁹ His interpretation only applies where what is represented as non-reality (a dream, a play) represents something unpleasant, 'something one would prefer to deny'.⁷⁰ Is *Pyramus and Thisbe* actually unpleasant? If it were a serious play (such as *The Mousetrap* is) then Balter's interpretation seems to apply. But *Pyramus and Thisbe* is never unpleasant, because it is so ludicrous, so playful. As soon as Balter qualifies what he has said about nested works of art, he inevitably opens a loophole in his argument, which does not exist for dreams within dreams.

He is, I believe, right to make that qualification. Psychoanalytic criticism is prone to generalising from the particular, so that instead of suggesting that there may be another way of looking at something, there must be a particular meaning to a dream, a symbol, a symptom, a slip of the tongue, or a play within a play. Nevertheless, Balter's is an interesting development of a number of strands of classical theory – the dream within a dream, the relationship between denial and the truth – that have been re-worked, and so present a fresh understanding of the significance of the play within the play.

⁶⁹ Balter, 'Dreams and works of art in works of art', p. 426.

⁷⁰ Balter, 'Dreams and works of art in works of art', p. 426.

Comparing *Pyramus and Thisbe* in psychoanalytic-literary criticism

Of the four psychoanalytic-literary critics who discuss the place of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in the whole play, none of them refer to Grinstein, but all describe, in different ways, a particular emphasis in the playlet that acts as a comment on the preceding four acts: Jan Lawson Hineley (1987) contrasts sexual anxiety and gender anxiety; Allen Dunn (1988) proposes guilt as a consistent theme; James Calderwood (1992) observes how the nested play doubles the experience of the lovers in the wood, as well as points forward to the anxiety of the lovers as their wedding-night approaches; and Thomas Frosch (2007) sees the playlet as representing a way to return from the childhood issues that have dominated earlier scenes and becoming free of the omnipotent mother.

Jan Hineley, now emeritus professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, partially draws upon Gui in her reading, following Gui in some of his sexual interpretations of the names of the artisans. However, she thinks that the name Snug and his occupation of joiner is not as Gui suggests, that is a symbol of joining the mythical lovers in intercourse, but of joining them in death, ‘an echo of Egeus’s earlier savagery’.⁷¹ She also suggests that the *Pyramus and Thisbe* play intensifies the anxiety about sexual roles ‘into confusion about sexual gender’.⁷² Hineley believes this ‘prepares us for the ordered sexuality of the traditional marriages at the play’s end’.⁷³ The words ‘prepares us’ suggests a similarity to Grinstein’s view of the nested play looking forward as well as back; however, I see *Pyramus and Thisbe* as *contrasting* with the Hineley’s ‘ordered sexuality ... at the play’s end’. If Grinstein’s view is correct that the play points forward, this suggests that ‘the traditional marriages at the end’ will not be so ordered after all.

⁷¹ Hineley, ‘Expounding the dream’, p. 129.

⁷² Hineley, ‘Expounding the dream’, p. 130.

⁷³ Hineley, ‘Expounding the dream’, p. 130.

There is an interesting but arguable perspective on *Pyramus and Thisbe* that is suggested by Allen Dunn (1988), where he argues that both the play as a whole and *Pyramus and Thisbe* portray sexual conflict and guilt.⁷⁴ He suggests that when the lovers are caught sleeping in the wood they experience guilt at having defied Theseus's ruling. The play within the play extends the theme of the lovers' guilt. Bottom similarly experiences repressed guilt, because he has been made an ass of – he has been humiliated; and in his performance in the nested play Bottom unintentionally makes a fool of himself. I cannot, as Dunn argues, detect guilt in the lovers when Theseus wakes them; and in relation to Bottom, I suggest that it is shame rather than guilt that he might experience (if he ever recognises he has been made to look an ass). Psychoanalysis distinguishes the two emotions: guilt tends to be experienced for having done wrong; whereas shame is an emotion experienced at having failed, or at being made to look a failure. But does Bottom ever feel guilt or shame at being made an ass? Rather, his response ('the eye of man, etc. 4.1.208ff) conveys wonder and amazement at his experience, and he is remarkably innocent of the fact that he has been used by Oberon to humiliate the queen – it is more likely to be Titania who might feel shame (TITANIA, 4.1.78). Although Dunn wants to make the connection between the lovers and Bottom's performance in the play, this does not approximate to Grinstein's idea of the interlocking relationship of the nested play to the containing play.

One of the most convincing psychoanalytic interpretations of the entire play either by a psychoanalyst or a literary critic is in Thomas Frosch's 2007 article on 'The missing child in

⁷⁴ Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream', pp. 15-32.

A Midsummer Night's Dream'.⁷⁵ Frosch stresses the psychological value for the audience of the nested play, but in a very different way from elsewhere in psychoanalytic literature. He only partially sees the purpose of *Pyramus and Thisbe* as reflecting the containing play. While the nested play to some extent parallels much of the main action of the *Dream*, it does so only to turn the struggles of the lovers into antics, and the tender relationship of Titania with Bottom into farce. Its function is to assist the audience, which has been involved in the wood in a return *to* childhood and childhood issues, to return *from* childhood. 'The burlesque performance of "Pyramus and Thisbe" disarms the attachment to childhood, presenting regressive modes of thought and behavior in absurd form, and thus helps complete a return to the world of the mature ego; the final act also reconstitutes the image of the father'.⁷⁶ *Pyramus and Thisbe* therefore has an underlying serious purpose as well as an obvious comic one.

Frosch demonstrates convincingly how much the language of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, viewed from a psychoanalytic perspective, wallows in childish humour and how it reflects the language of 'polymorphous perversity' – the confused sexuality of the young child. I have no disagreement with that part of his argument. But I am not convinced that the purpose of the artisans' play is that it helps the audience put childish ideas and regression to one side. If anything the sheer sense of absurdity that comes from watching such a nonsensical portrayal of a tragic story risks promoting a return to the irresponsibility of childhood. Admittedly Theseus delivers a sober final speech (5.1.347-53) as he leaves the players to their bergomask, as if he is rather tired of their antics. But I doubt if the theatre audience feels the same. It is the closing speeches that bring the audience back down to a particular type of reality.

⁷⁵ I discuss his central argument about the play in Chapter 4.

⁷⁶ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 485.

When Frosch says that *Pyramus and Thisbe* is essentially a way of disarming and detoxifying ‘the destructive possibilities’ of the four lovers, he follows other literary critics, including Marjorie Garber, whom he acknowledges.⁷⁷ He is of course close to the more usual critical view of *Pyramus and Thisbe* as comically detoxifying the tension in the scenes in the wood. When he applies the same detoxification to Bottom I am not sure that I can agree. Bottom, according to Frosch’s over-arching analysis of the play, has regressed to childhood in the scenes where he wears the ass’s head. But Bottom did not need to regress. Bottom was already the child in his eagerness to play all the parts without any thought as to his suitability for the role. It is easy to imagine him as a child saying ‘Me! Me!’ And does he actually mature when he acts the part of Pyramus? He seems to remain like a child, innocently arguing with Theseus. I am led to think Gui is right when he suggests that Bottom actually never resolves his oedipal problem, and that his inability to enter the character without investing it with his own egotism makes him appear, as most productions play him, as a clown rather than as someone who has matured.

Comparing *Pyramus and Thisbe* in literary criticism

The majority of literary critics such as Schlegel in the early nineteenth century had seen *Pyramus and Thisbe* as a parody reflecting at least part of the plot of the lovers in the wood.⁷⁸ Some early critics such as Henry James had considered the play within the play to be a device for bringing together the two groups who up to that point have had

⁷⁷ Frosch, ‘The missing child’, p. 493. He acknowledges Garber and another literary critic for his use of ‘disarming’ and the experience of the lovers. Frosch’s article carries an oedipal interpretation that is discussed more fully in chapter 4.

⁷⁸ Kennedy and Kennedy, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p. 83. Further examples can be seen in extracts in the book, such as Hermann Ulrici (1846), p. 155, or Charles Clark (1863), p. 215, or Frederick Boas (1896), p. 334.

separate scenes – the court and the artisans.⁷⁹ Others contrast ‘Fairyland and Clownland’.⁸⁰

Despite frequent references to the artisans’ play, in 1964 the American literary critic Robert Dent remarked that ‘few critics have had much to say about the relationship of *Pyramus and Thisbe* to the play as a whole’.⁸¹ This may be true inasmuch as the play within the play has been seen in these limited ways. Grinstein with his equation of the dream in the dream and the play in the play therefore brings a different dimension to the placing of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in the whole. Gui and Grinstein seem to have anticipated the interest literary criticism showed later, predating even C. L. Barber’s 1959 treatment of the inner play, which in his words ‘fits hilarious fun into the whole comedy’s development of attitude and understanding’, and although ‘the laughs explode one after another ... yet they are still on the subject’.⁸² Neither Barber nor Dent appear to have knowledge of Gui or Grinstein, showing how prescient both these earlier authors were in their linking of the inner play with the outer play, even if their arguments have remained generally unnoticed in the wider literary world.⁸³

There is however one aspect to Dent’s reading of the nested play that psychoanalysis has not noticed, yet is of particular interest to the psychoanalytic critic. His argument for Shakespeare introducing *Pyramus and Thisbe* is that if the play, up to the final act, has

⁷⁹ Kennedy and Kennedy, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p. 166.

⁸⁰ e.g. Francis Marshall (1888) (Kennedy and Kennedy, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p. 294).

⁸¹ R. W. Dent, ‘Imagination in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15.2 (1964), p. 122.

⁸² Barber, *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy*, p. 153.

⁸³ Dent asks the question why Shakespeare introduces a play within the play, and why he gives it to the *Pyramus and Thisbe* plot. His answer is a common one in literary criticism, that one motive may have been to show a play worse than his own offering, a parody of some of the plays staged at that time; and a second motive that he wanted to invite comparison to the main plot: ‘Like Hermia and Lysander, Pyramus and Thisbe would run off to the woods in the night, frantically hoping to escape the obstacles to their true love’ (‘Imagination’, p. 123).

been about the role of imagination in love, in the final act it is about the role of imagination in drama. The mechanicals' rehearsing of the play and their final performance demonstrates that in their own imagination 'they think their audience over- and under-imaginative'.⁸⁴ Symbolism and symbolic language is very important in psychoanalytic theory, the capacity to symbolise being seen as a major developmental step in childhood. The artisans not only have to supply a man to represent the moon, but have to explain this to the audience; and to explain that the lion is not a real lion. Such a possibility, that imagination is important in understanding *Pyramus and Thisbe*, makes a useful addition to a psychological perspective.

An interesting difference is seen when comparing David Marshall's discussion of *Pyramus and Thisbe* (1982) with one aspect of Gui's. Like Gui he emphasises Snug's occupation as a joiner, although not, as Gui suggests, in any sexual sense. The other artisans also have occupations that involve joining 'what is apart or mend[ing] what has been rent, broken, or sundered'.⁸⁵ Marshall sees *Pyramus and Thisbe* as a 'theatrical representation of a world where people appear sundered from themselves and each other'.⁸⁶ The play within a play is 'a picture of what has been sundered: a partition that should also remind us of our place' – here Marshall refers also to the theatre audience.⁸⁷ As in much psychoanalytic criticism Marshall thinks the play as a whole 'ends with a promise of mending'.⁸⁸ 'Promise' suggests that the mending has yet to come. His conclusion is rather different from other literary critics who see the playlet as a means of

⁸⁴ Dent, 'Imagination', p. 126.

⁸⁵ David Marshall, 'Exchanging visions: reading A Midsummer Night's Dream', *English Literary History*, 49.3 (1982), p. 562.

⁸⁶ Marshall, 'Exchanging visions', p. 564.

⁸⁷ Marshall, 'Exchanging visions', p. 565.

⁸⁸ Marshall, 'Exchanging visions', p. 565. This is partly seen in the amateur actors who 'join, construct, repair and weave together'; and partly in Puck's epilogue, twice referring to 'mend', and twice to 'amend'. The artisan actors suggest a type of healing of the many rifts that the audience has witnessed.

relieving the tension in earlier scenes, and again is more in accord with the Grinstein argument that the play within the play reflects not just the past discord in the wood, but the present possibilities for discord.

Close to Grinstein's and Balter's identification of the reality implicit in the dream within the dream and the play within the play is Peter Hollindale's comment on *Pyramus and Thisbe* that it is more than a parody and more than comic.⁸⁹ In an interesting and enigmatic sentence he says that 'this courtly audience, now so pleased with itself, would be laughing on the other side of its face if it knew what we know'.⁹⁰ What precisely it is that we know that they don't is not clear, but there is again the hint that Hollindale thinks the play within the play has more to reveal.

Peter Holland makes an equally interesting comment on the difference between the treatment of *Pyramus and Thisbe* by scholars, and its reception by audiences, 'who appear to have less difficulty than scholars in recognizing that "Pyramus and Thisbe" has a complex and powerful meaning within *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, far more important than any local parodic effect'.⁹¹ This is remarkably close to how psychoanalytic critics also respond to the play. They may be uninterested in its historical sources, and less interested in theatrical productions, but they focus instead on what it is about the play that gives it such psychological significance, and how that aspect relates to the whole.

Some literary critics see *Pyramus and Thisbe* as showing events that in the case of the

⁸⁹ Peter Hollindale, *Critical Studies: A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 142.

⁹⁰ Hollindale, *Critical Studies*, p. 142.

⁹¹ Peter Holland, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 85.

play's lovers might have happened but did not happen.⁹² This points up a difference from Grinstein who suggests that such a play may prefigure events that *will* happen. No literary critic quite approaches Grinstein's perception of the inner play revealing the reality of how romantic love may change with the passage of time.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have speculated about the possible significance of the dream within the dream. Working with more substantial evidence of what psychoanalytic critics have written about the play within the play, I have shown that such interpretations confirm the conclusions of many literary critics in the last fifty years, that the play within the play in the *Dream* deserves to be treated as more than a parody. Psychoanalytic criticism has in addition demonstrated the value of equating the play within the play with the dream within the dream.

While the dream in a dream is a rare occurrence in literature, the *Dream* is one place where the phenomenon of such dreaming (that is known to be true in experience) is possibly seen in fictional form.⁹³ I admit that this requires the premise that Hermia's and Bottom's dreams take place within a dream – either the dream-wood or within the dream-play.⁹⁴ I do not wish to make too much of that possibility, but I have suggested that this provides support, through a rather different psychoanalytic pathway, for the

⁹² Garber, for instance, writing originally in 1974, sees the play within the play (she uses the phrase) as absorbing and disarming 'the tragic alternative, the events which did not happen' (*Dream in Shakespeare*, p. 81).

⁹³ There is an excellent example in the film *Mulholland Drive* of a dream within a dream. If the usual interpretation is accepted, the first three-quarters of the film is Diane's dream. In that dream she dreams of a young man, Dan (a contraction of Diane?) relating his dream to his therapist – a very significant dream that illustrates her suicidal feelings (David Lynch, *Mulholland Drive* (Studio Canal, 2001) DFD04004).

⁹⁴ I find support for this in Marjorie Garber: 'In the great dream of the forest experience and the smaller dreams within it ...' (*Dream in Shakespeare*, p. 60).

position taken by Mervyn Faber and Norman Holland, that the dreams in the play must be considered in context. Where my argument differs from theirs is that clinical discussions of the dream within a dream suggest that equal weight needs to be given to both the nested dream and the containing dream: the two interpenetrate, and in their interpretations they inform each other. It is neither Gui's one-sidedness that it must be Bottom's dream that informs the whole play; nor Faber's and Holland's one-sidedness that the play must inform interpretation of the dream. It is rather in the words of Mahon quoted earlier that 'both ... are part of one elaborate illusion, and ... both can be studied profitably'.⁹⁵ To that I add that the interpretation of each benefits from the interpretation of the other. I have toyed with possibilities for further developing Bottom's dream, although I am no more convinced by my speculative interpretations than I am by Gui's much more serious attempt to unpack the dream and the dream-work that supposedly shaped it. I have however, suggested some ways in which Hermia's dream demonstrates the value of this approach to interpretation.

In contrast to such speculation, *Pyramus and Thisbe* has yielded some fruitful insights from all the types of criticism referred to in this chapter, since it is rooted more obviously in the text of the play. Interpretations of its place have varied among psychoanalytic critics as much as among literary critics, although there is common ground between the different types of critics discussed here, that *Pyramus and Thisbe* has a greater significance than 19th century critics and early 20th century critics ever acknowledged. In all types of criticism examples can be found of the nested play re-capitulating earlier events in comic form; and of it playing an important part in moving the play as a whole towards some sort of resolution. A few critics – and it is mainly the psychoanalytic critics – also see the nested

⁹⁵ Mahon, 'Dreams within dreams', p. 119.

play as pointing forward, either to the coming wedding night, or even to the future of the marriages so recently solemnised. *Pyramus and Thisbe* in some sense anticipates an unknown future for the characters in the play, one that is perhaps more able to be envisaged by psychoanalysts as a difficult future, since their clinical work constantly reminds them of the precariousness of loving relations. In that sense psychoanalysis has an important contribution to make to literary criticism.

One of the most interesting of the psychoanalytic contributions comes from Leon Balter's two articles, of which the second has been examined here because of its reference to the *Dream*. He presents a convincing reinforcement of the significance of *Pyramus and Thisbe* within the play. He again demonstrates how tenuous romantic love is.⁹⁶ This thesis has not been the place to consider his extension of the idea of the dream within a dream, not just to the play within the play but to art within dreams, and art within art. Taken together with Hilary Hoge's inclusion of the nested book within a containing book, and her assertion that 'establishing multiple levels of reality and illusion ... opens a potential space wherein meanings may be tried on', this suggests the fruitfulness for literary criticism of this type of psychoanalytic insight.⁹⁷

If we were to weigh in a balance the type of meanings arrived at by psychoanalytic and literary critics, I suspect that the psychoanalytic critics attach slightly more weight to *Pyramus and Thisbe* demonstrating fears and anxieties, whereas literary critics attach more weight to resolution. As critics, psychoanalysts tend to focus on feelings, from passionate desire to deep anxiety. The focus in psychoanalytic therapy is on the patient's emotional desires and responses, which are seen as dominating their thinking, so that

⁹⁶ A theme I return to in Chapter 4.

⁹⁷ H. Hoge, 'Dreams within dreams; books within books', p. 23.

thinking can easily be confused by feelings.⁹⁸ It is through expressing and understanding feelings that thinking begins to assume a more balancing function – a movement sometimes expressed as the goal of psychoanalysis: ‘Wo Es war, soll Ich werden’ – ‘Where It was, I should become’.⁹⁹ The play, as Goldstein argues, is about becoming, about achieving a sense of self.¹⁰⁰ But the scenes in the wood show emotion-led rather than rational thinking; and *Pyramus and Thisbe* reeks with high emotion. I suggest that this is the reason why the psychoanalytic critics can be more pessimistic about the resolution of those feelings by the end of both *Pyramus and Thisbe* and the play itself.

This other aspect, that the nested play carries some foreboding, and indeed enacts relationships and actions which are not ultimately comic, is a significant aspect of psychoanalytic criticism, which stresses that the nested play contains nightmare elements. In consequence of the symbiotic relationship between *Pyramus and Thisbe* and the play in which it appears, so too does the *Dream* itself. It is to the nightmare *Dream* I turn in Chapter 3.

⁹⁸ Cognitive-behavioural therapy is very different, since it tends to focus on how a person processes what happens to them through negative thinking.

⁹⁹ Sigmund Freud, ‘New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis’, 1933, *Standard Edition*, Volume XXII (London Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1964), p. 80. The usual English (mis)translation is ‘Where id was there shall ego be’.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 3.

Three: The dark side of the *Dream*

This chapter examines a remarkable convergence in psychoanalytic criticism, in literary criticism and in theatre that takes place in respect of the *Dream*, principally in America in the 1960s and 1970s. Instead of the play being understood as a comedy of romantic love, where a beneficent fairy world is temporarily disturbed by a marital tiff, some readings and some productions have focused on a wilder sexuality, even on bestiality. The relationships between the various couples in the play are acknowledged as seriously aggressive and disturbing. In psychoanalytic criticism, an example of a fresh perspective is seen where the emphasis is on terrifying crises in personal identity.

The chapter concentrates upon a significant psychoanalytic paper, 'Identity crises in a midsummer nightmare: comedy as terror in disguise' by Melvin Goldstein published in 1973, around 20 years after Gui's and Grinstein's. I examine Goldstein's thesis in three respects: I discuss sympathetically his identification of identity crises in the play's human characters; I question whether identity crises can really be said to constitute the terror in his title, but agree with him that there is a nightmare quality to the form they take. I suggest that his argument might have been strengthened had he incorporated Freud's theories on the function of humour in his further argument that comedy disguises terror. I attribute his diagnosis of psychopathological disorders of three of the characters in his argument to the lingering investment in classical psychoanalysis. In the course of this examination of Goldstein's paper I show what careful analysis he makes of the language used by the various characters in the play.

I note the minimal impact of Goldstein's paper, important though it is in its demonstration of fresh psychoanalytic interpretations. There are a number of possible influences on the darker interpretation Goldstein makes of the play, which has strong similarities to some literary criticism and some theatre productions of the play around the same time. I therefore discuss the contextual and cultural background to Goldstein's paper in terms of developments in psychoanalysis and in literary criticism, including the work of Jan Kott, and the socio-political milieu in America at that time.¹ I include illustrations of how theatrical productions both before, after and including Peter Brook's 1970 production radically changed the 'Fairyland and Clownland' stagings of the *Dream*.²

I refer to an aspect of Goldstein's paper that is seen independently in a British psychoanalytic reading by Margaret and Michael Rustin (2002);³ and compare these different psychoanalytic readings with three psychoanalytic-literary critics, Mervyn Faber (1973), Mordecai Marcus (1981), and Thomas Frosch (2007), who in distinctive ways suggest a somewhat darker reading of the *Dream*.⁴ I briefly compare other dark readings of the play in literary criticism around the same time as Goldstein – in Allan Lewis (1969), Michael Taylor (1969), Hugh Richmond (1971) and Alexander Leggatt (1974).⁵ I conclude that the play does have nightmare elements, for the most part disguised by the play's humour and farcical scenes, elements that are highlighted

¹ Jan Kott, 'Titania and the ass's head', in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974) pp. 214-35.

² E.g. Francis Marshall (1888) (Kennedy and Kennedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 294).

³ Margaret and Michael Rustin, *Drama, Psychoanalysis and Society* (London: Karnac, 2002).

⁴ Faber, 'Hermia's dream'; Mordecai Marcus, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream: the dialectic of Eros-Thanatos', *American Imago*, 38 (1981), pp. 269-78; Frosch, 'The missing child' (2007).

⁵ Allan Lewis, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream – fairy fantasy or erotic nightmare'; Michael Taylor, 'The darker purpose of A Midsummer Night's Dream', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 9.2 (1969), pp. 259-73; Hugh Richmond, *Shakespeare's Sexual Comedy: A Mirror for Lovers* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971); Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love* (London, Methuen, 1974).

specifically by Goldstein. I propose that Goldstein's nightmare reading of the play complements and strengthens darker interpretations in literary criticism from a psychoanalytic perspective; and I suggest that his interpretation of identity crises in many of the characters is in particular an original contribution to literary criticism.

Melvin Goldstein (1973): Identity crises in a midsummer nightmare

With the exception of those literary critics who are drawn to psychoanalytic interpretations of the *Dream* Goldstein is one of the few non-medical psychotherapists writing on the play in American psychoanalytic journals.⁶ He was a psychology professor at the University of Hartford from 1962-94, as well as a psychotherapist in private practice for thirty years. His identification of identity crises in the characters and the nightmare quality of the play introduces new elements into psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream*. Although Goldstein does not make any divisions in his 16,000 word paper, I identify three strands in his argument in order to examine and discuss them separately: his convincing argument about identity issues; his argument that comedy disguises terror and nightmare; and his diagnostic categorisation of some of the characters.

Goldstein devotes most of his attention to crises of identity in Theseus, Lysander, Demetrius, Oberon and the artisans – his treatment of Helena is less of an identity crisis and more of a diagnosis of mental disturbance. Couched in psycho-sexual terms, four men (Theseus, Egeus, Lysander and Demetrius) and the fairy king all fear impotence in their anxiety that they either will lose, or already have lost 'power over their feminine counterparts'.⁷ That Goldstein does not employ the language of patriarchy here is partly

⁶ This is partly because for many years, unlike in Britain and Europe, full psychoanalytic qualification in the USA was only open to those who were medically qualified.

⁷ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 179.

an indication that it had not yet come into prominence as a gender issue in psychoanalysis. He demonstrates how this was partly due to the tendency of classical psychoanalysis at that time to concentrate more on the individual (and the oedipal family) than on the impact of cultural and socio-political norms.

Goldstein gives examples of male power over women through the double-edged use of language: Theseus accepts that a father can ‘leave the figure or disfigure’ his child (1.1.51); which, while it suggests moulding a child to his own liking, like a wax figure, Goldstein sees as also implying carving up the child’s face. Oberon relates to Titania in much the same way as Egeus to his daughter: ‘Am I not thy lord’ (OBERON, 2.1.63) – as if Titania is a piece of property to be commanded.⁸ This suggests to me that in the case of Theseus and Egeus it is not, as Goldstein argues, that their manhood is threatened, but their authority. Goldstein’s argument about anxiety about impotence is more cogent when it comes to Lysander and Demetrius who are, in Oberon’s words, ‘testy rivals’ (3.2.358). Goldstein does not think ‘testy’ has anything to do with ‘testicles’, although by posing such a question he obliquely supports his potency/impotency interpretation – an interpretation that could have been more solidly supported had he used Puck’s line when Lysander and Demetrius threaten to fight: ‘we’ll try no manhood here’ (3.2.412).

The lovers’ escape into the wood is a flight from reality, according to Goldstein, a view that I qualify below, taking a more positive view of it than Goldstein appears to. When in Act 5 the four lovers return to Athens this is ‘the most courageous act in the play’ Goldstein sees them as heroes.⁹

⁸ The dominant position of the man, whether as father or husband, would of course have been more acceptable to a 16th century setting than in our contemporary Western culture.

⁹ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 190.

They will not accept themselves as composites of conditioned reflexes and conditioned nervous systems. They will rise superior to their defects, their less-than-perfect backgrounds. Thus they decide not to remain prisoners of their flights into unreality, and they gamble on their individual strengths to cope with reality.¹⁰

I prefer to see their return as moving towards a more adult relationship with Theseus and the court, which Theseus recognises when he meets them at daybreak in the wood.

At the end of the play, and at the end of Goldstein's article, it is Theseus about whom Goldstein has the most concern: the Duke's emphasis on reason has been challenged by the imaginative elements in the play. It is less obvious that Theseus has resolved the identity crisis that Goldstein had originally described – his fear of impotence and the challenge to his authority. Goldstein suggests that Theseus's responses to *Pyramus and Thisbe* 'are puzzling and conflicting'.¹¹ He becomes sad when Pyramus stabs himself; and this change of mood, thinks Goldstein, 'is the result of Pyramus stabbing himself through his "left pap," an all too unhappy reminder of his Amazon bride-to-be and of her nonexistent left pap'.¹² Although the play may appear to have a happy ending as Theseus leads the wedding party off to 'nightly revels and new jollity', Goldstein believes that Theseus has become apprehensive as a result of the artisans' play. He has reacted negatively, using in this final act 21 of the 28 negatives in his speeches in the whole play. This is one of a number of examples of Goldstein's fine lexical analysis of the text. A sign that Theseus is troubled is seen in his command: 'No epilogue' (5.1.347). Goldstein

¹⁰ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 191.

¹¹ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 194.

¹² Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 194.

does not make the comparison, but the impression he gives is that Theseus is troubled by *Pyramus and Thisbe* much like Claudius following *The Mousetrap* in *Hamlet*. He leaves stage ‘before he could hear the message he didn’t want to hear’.¹³ As he is replaced on stage by Oberon, who for Goldstein represents the denied part of Theseus, there is an attempt to allay Theseus’s fears as well as those of the audience that have been aroused by the little play. Does this mean that Theseus is himself now through his crisis? There is an ambiguity in Goldstein’s treatment of Theseus in his last appearance on the stage – perhaps rightly so.

Goldstein makes a rather unsympathetic analysis of Helena’s response to her experience in the wood. It is she who receives his greatest attention in those scenes. He suggests rightly that she suffers the greatest anguish, ‘the only character who wants someone but has nothing that anyone else wants’, but also that she is ‘a victim of her desires’.¹⁴ Throughout the play ‘she is isolated as is no other character ... and is manipulated by the desires of the other lovers’.¹⁵ Goldstein describes her as passive and masochistic, and her behaviour as ‘infantile’.¹⁶ She rejects Demetrius’s hate; and when she is later loved by both him and Lysander, she rejects his love as well. Yet my understanding of her is that she must sense that the men’s sudden declarations of love smack of insincerity: the audience knows that their words simply demonstrate blind love rather than genuine devotion; Helena herself sees their devotion as a plot, making fun of her: ‘I perceive they have conjoined all three / to fashion this sport in spite of me’ (3.2.193-4). She sees them as mocking her (3.2.150), and believes they must hate her (3.2.154). There is every reason to reject their love.

¹³ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 195. There is some similarity here to Gui’s view that Bottom does not want to look at the meaning of his dream.

¹⁴ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 183.

¹⁵ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 183.

¹⁶ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 183.

Through an analysis of Helena's speech patterns, where she uses 23 conditional verbs, Goldstein attempts to show that 'she employs adjective after adjective to describe herself as an unfortunate victim of unjust circumstances. Her self-descriptions are mirrors of self-pity'.¹⁷ 'Victim', yes, but any self-pity is surely justified? He departs from the text when he assumes that Helena, 'by the end of her nightmare ... has finally achieved what she has feared all along and thus what she wanted most: her total isolation'.¹⁸ That seems scarcely so, since at the end of her nightmare she wins Demetrius's supposedly more genuine love. What is confusing is the change in Helen when, having rejected Demetrius's 'conversion' in the night, she apparently has no concern when she wakes at dawn to find he loves her. She rather too easily accepts his love, when a few hours earlier she had seen through his wild protestations. Perhaps her description of him as a jewel who is 'Mine own and not mine own' (HELENA, 4.1.191) reveals her ambivalence. But Goldstein does not refer to what appears in his terminology to be a foreclosure of her identity crisis.¹⁹ Such a term refers to one solution to an adolescent identity crisis described by Kernberg as 'a combination of isolation and submission to the identity of a leader or a group'.²⁰

I do not question Goldstein's description of Helena as a very distressed character and that she is in pain. I can see how she blames herself when Goldstein singles her out as accepting that 'Tis partly my own fault, / Which death or absence soon shall remedy' (HELENA, 3.2.243-244). I agree with him that the other lovers are also shaken by their

¹⁷ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 184.

¹⁸ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', pp. 187-8.

¹⁹ This was an aspect of adolescent identity crises described by J. Marcia ('Development and validation of ego identity status', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3.5 (1966), pp. 551-8) and could have been known to Goldstein.

²⁰ O.F. Kernberg, 'Identity: recent findings and clinical implications', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 75 (2006), p. 973.

nightmarish experience, yet they do not accept any blame for their situation – ‘Demetrius does not recall that his fickleness makes him an “inconstant man,” nor does Lysander understand Helena’s plea that he remain constant to Hermia’.²¹ The men, of course, are in a state of narcosis, so there is no reason why they should contemplate blaming themselves. But another way of viewing Helena is that she is the only one who attempts to understand what is happening, and in her confusion she can only think it is she who must have got it wrong. My disagreement with Goldstein is with the finer points of his discussion of Helena, and his lack of empathy for her situation. His central argument, that she has a severe identity crisis in the face of her treatment by the other three, is nonetheless convincing.

Goldstein only briefly considers the crisis undergone by Hermia, and in much less detail. She ‘like Helena ... does not fare very well’.²² He employs the phrase ‘union in partition’ (HELENA, 3.2.210) to describe Hermia’s relationship to Helena as ‘girl friend, female lover, male lover, and mother’.²³ Hermia can only achieve her individual identity by separation from Helena. It is difficult in this case to see how ‘partition’ refers to Hermia’s various roles in the relationship between the two women, although the point is well made that marrying Lysander involves a change in Hermia’s identity, and a consequent change in her ‘double cherry’ relationship with Helena (HELENA, 3.2.209). However, there is a much greater shift in identity for Hermia than Goldstein seems to recognise: from being Egeus’s daughter, his property to dispose of as he thinks fit, she becomes, if not completely her own woman, at least Lysander’s wife.²⁴

²¹ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 184.

²² Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 188.

²³ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 204n.

²⁴ I am cognisant of her and Hermia’s relative silence in Act 5. It is difficult to imagine her as a modern feminist.

Goldstein includes an analysis of Hermia's speeches: in Act 3.2, she asks 17 of the total 22 questions she asks in the whole play, and in the same scene she makes 23 negative statements out of the 32 negatives she utters in the whole play. He suggests her questions demonstrate her fear of losing her identity, as for example in 3.2.271-77, where she wonders why she is now hated, since she is still as fair as she was before. He concludes:

For both Hermia and Helena the irony exists that their flight into the world of dreams has resulted in experiences so terrifying that they need to awake to face reality, however difficult it will be for them; their alternative is too painful and too destructive; it is to become permanently mad.²⁵

I do not think Hermia fears *losing* her identity in madness. This is of course a comedy, but it is helpful here to make a comparison with Ophelia, also forbidden by her father to respond to Hamlet and then rejected by Hamlet, both contributory factors in making her mad. Hermia's experience is different: she goes through a period of intense anxiety, where she is in a transitional state in terms of her identity. She wonders to whom *does* she belong? Her experience in the wood forces her to face being isolated, for what seems an interminable time. To be able to separate from the close relationship with Helena is an essential part of finding her own adult identity. Goldstein thinks both Helena and Hermia have 'to test the limits of what has been imprinted upon them; they have decided to cope with and make useful or defend against the tyranny of the destructive father, Egeus'.²⁶ It is true that Hermia has suffered from Egeus's tyranny, and is then rejected by Lysander, but her pain is of a different sort to Helena's which is rejection by the one she loves, and then having love forced upon her by both young men.

²⁵ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 188.

²⁶ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', pp. 190-1.

In the matter of an identity crisis, it is strange that Hippolyta and Titania almost escape Goldstein's notice. Titania's only crisis, according to him, is that she has to give up her possessiveness of the Indian boy; and Hippolyta's that she has to move from a male role (as Queen of the Amazons) to a female role – although Goldstein admits that this is what he calls a 'patrist (*sic*) point of view'.²⁷ This is as close as he comes to using the term 'patriarchal'.

The artisans have a rather different anxiety in the way their characters are understood by Goldstein. Here it is not a question of impotence, or of a challenge to authority, or of relationship issues. He accepts that the artisans' concern is not equivalent to that of the others; their anxiety is about trying to act when they do not have sufficient sense of their own identity. There seem to be two strands to this line of reasoning: the first is that they are 'concerned with their respective expressions of their animality, of their representations of nature, and of their roles as inanimate objects'.²⁸ They cannot therefore play their roles without expressing doubts, such as about the play frightening the audience, or Flute not wanting to play a woman.²⁹ The second strand employs an argument about the psychology of actors. Actors need sufficiently robust mental health in order to take on another's identity. Goldstein thinks their identity crisis is 'resolved', when Puck, in his epilogue, speaks of animals behaving as they should: 'the hungry lion roars', etc. (5.1.362).

It is difficult, however, to see how this connects to any identity crisis. Goldstein seems to

²⁷ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 189.

²⁸ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 181.

²⁹ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 181.

want to identify and resolve all the identity crises by the end of the play, so he strains to find a way of integrating the artisans into his thesis. Whereas it is possible to argue that Demetrius and Lysander have come through their crises when they awake in Theseus's presence, there is no suggestion in anything the artisans say during the nested play that indicates they have overcome their anxiety about their representations; and they do not speak after the play.

Goldstein distinguishes Bottom from his companions, since he is willing to take on all the roles in Quince's play. This is quite a different interpretation from Gui who, as has been seen earlier, suggests that Bottom's wish to play the tyrant and the lion 'reveals many of his sexual proclivities ... hoping to be able to indulge as freely as the father in the primal scene his sexual sadistic impulses'.³⁰ Nevertheless Bottom is similarly foregrounded amongst the artisans since Goldstein sees him as 'the most autonomous, imaginative of persons. His delight in imagining himself in many roles, foolish as it may appear, suggests a comfort with self which none of the other characters in the play rivals'.³¹ He adds that not only is Bottom ready to play all the roles in Quince's play, but he is also the only mortal to see the fairy kingdom. Yet it is not possible to split off Bottom from his companions in their concern about their portrayal of the lion and the moon. Against Goldstein's reluctance to include Bottom in having an identity crisis, I prefer to see his wish to play Thisbe or the Lion, in addition to Pyramus, as indicating both an omnipotent view of his acting ability and, as the nested play amply demonstrates, an exhibitionistic character. A psychoanalytic interpretation for this could be attributed to

³⁰ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 281.

³¹ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 182.

various causes, including compensating for feeling small and sexually inadequate.³²

However, my rejoinder to Goldstein is mere psychoanalytic speculation of the sort that rightly can be challenged from all the evidence, which points the other way.

Goldstein's identification of these identity crises is however generally a sound interpretation. An identity crisis makes particular sense in relation to the adolescent lovers, and possibly rings true for Theseus and Hippolyta, but only perhaps for the artisans and for Titania, and not at all for Oberon and Puck. Like Garber whose *Dream in Shakespeare* was published the year following his own paper, Goldstein argues that 'all of the characters in *AMND* go through some kind of change, be it a change in attitude, a transformation through growth, or a metamorphosis of character'.³³

Goldstein: nightmare or terror: the function of comedy

Before transformation can occur, the characters have to endure considerable suffering, which 'in a comedy, unlike the suffering in a nightmare, must be camouflaged'.³⁴ This is a second aspect of Goldstein's paper which I find convincing, although I prefer the phrase 'midsummer nightmare' in the title of his paper to the notion of comedy being 'terror in disguise'. Nevertheless, Goldstein has a valuable point to make about comedy from a psychoanalytic perspective, which could have benefitted from referring back to

³² For example, a near contemporaneous article that suggests exhibitionism is 'based on the attempt to fascinate the audience in a magical way. The fusion of the aggressive and libidinal aims is demonstrated quite clearly' (A. J. Siegman, 'Exhibitionism and fascination', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 12 (1964), p. 328). If he does feel sexually inadequate, possession of an ass's penis is a great phantasy!

³³ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 177. But does Goldstein intend the same outcome for Egeus? His comment is ambiguous: 'Egeus, the tyrannical father, *seeming* the exception, proves the rule' (p. 177, my emphasis). There is no indication in Garber's *Dream in Shakespeare* that she was aware of any specific psychoanalytic criticism of the play, let alone of Goldstein. Nor does Goldstein refer to any influence by Garber, such as a preview of her book, or any discussion he might have had with her. Independently they arrive at a similar interpretation of the play.

³⁴ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 180.

Freud's theories about humour. A short digression taking us back to Freud will explain my point.

Freud first wrote about humour in his 1905 book on jokes – a mistranslation of the German for 'wit', the latter term aligning him more with the verbal wit that is so prevalent in Shakespeare's plays, whether in the comedies or to a lesser extent in the tragedies.³⁵ Freud was interested in how jokes function. In a later paper on humour, written in 1927, he reflects on what it is within the psyche that derives pleasure from humour, whether as the author of the joke or witty remark, or as the listener to it.³⁶ He gives the example of the criminal being taken to the gallows on a Monday morning who quips, 'Well, the week's beginning nicely'. The remark gives the criminal some sense of satisfaction. The listener, at one remove, also feels some pleasure. Freud's conclusion is that the super-ego, normally portrayed by him as a harsh critic, is here providing some comfort to the ego that otherwise would feel distress: 'The essence of humour is that one spares oneself the affects to which the situation would naturally give rise and dismisses the possibility of such expressions of emotion with a jest'.³⁷ It is a way of fending off reality, one that Freud implies is more healthy than some other ways of trying to evade suffering, such as intoxication, ecstasy, narcissism, neurosis and madness. In this he echoes one theory of comedy in Elizabethan drama, where the represented action is intended to expose to dramatic ridicule what George Puttenham calls 'the common abuses of man's life'.³⁸ Freud might have agreed with Catherine Bates's description of Shakespearean comedy: 'if tragedy remains ... generally skeptical of ordering systems, comedy delights in the one kind of order over which human beings can exert total

³⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious', 1905, *Standard Edition*, Volume VIII (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1960), pp. 1-247.

³⁶ Sigmund Freud, 'Humour', 1927, *Standard Edition*, Volume XXI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 159-166.

³⁷ Freud, 'Humour', p. 162.

³⁸ George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, F. Whigham and W. Rebhorn eds. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press (1589/2007), pp.120-21.

control: the work of art'.³⁹ A good joke is sometimes a work of art. But Bates also says that in the *Dream* 'the success of art in ordering human experience is held very much in the balance'.⁴⁰ It is a close-run thing, somewhat reflecting Goldstein's view that this comedy is 'terror in disguise'.

Goldstein discusses disguise more generally in Shakespeare's comedies: they involve 'a series of obstacles which must be run before marriage can take place', of which the major obstacle is seen in the variations on the theme of disguise.⁴¹ He draws on a number of critics who have written about disguise in Shakespeare's plays. Disguise 'amuses but it also confuses; in the amusement is the pleasure, in the confusion is the displeasure ... Both the pleasure and the displeasure of the audience are directly proportional to the degree of the disguise'.⁴² If there is no disguise, there is nothing comic, but the further away from reality the disguise moves, the more discomfort it produces.⁴³ This is a valuable insight into the type of humour that the scenes in the wood generate, which Goldstein might usefully have expanded. The disguise in the *Dream* is surely the dramatic irony that the audience knows that the way in which the young men are behaving in relation to Hermia and Helena is a variation on disguise. It is quite different from Viola in *Twelfth Night* or Rosalind in *As You Like It* disguising themselves as men. Because of the effect of the love-juice Lysander and Demetrius are not their true selves. They do not know it, unlike the more conventional types of disguise. The audience knows it and that is the comic element in the scenes in the wood, which in

³⁹ Catherine Bates, 'Love and courtship', in Alexander Leggatt ed. *Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 109.

⁴⁰ Bates, 'Love and courtship', p. 116.

⁴¹ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 170.

⁴² Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 170.

⁴³ The passage is on p. 170. Unfortunately Goldstein, unusually, provides rather incomplete references at this point, citing three literary critics, and only two references in a footnote, but neither is attributed to any of the three names in the text.

one sense renders the hatred that the lovers show to each other less threatening to the audience than if it was 'real'.

I am less convinced by Goldstein's assertion that 'all forms of disguise are vehicles into madness; the more the disguise becomes us, the more mad we become'.⁴⁴ Is Goldstein saying that too much humour risks breaking down as a defence, and exposing the raw feelings beneath – and that this can lead to the 'terror' of madness? Unlike Goldstein in his diagnosis of Helena, I see no sign of actual madness in her or elsewhere in the play; there are scenes where tempers fray, where the lovers are 'mad' at each other, where reason and reasonableness is tested, but the disguise ensures the audience will never think that the worst is yet to come.⁴⁵

Goldstein is convincing in his identification of Shakespeare's comedies with distress and loss. He gives examples from other plays: Olivia in *Twelfth Night* mourns her father and her brother (indeed Viola also mourns her brother); an old man seeks his son at the start of *A Comedy of Errors*, to say farewell before he is hanged. He concludes: 'These themes hardly provoke laughter; it is the treatment of these themes which distinguishes tragedy from comedy, but the tragedy is always there within the comedy'.⁴⁶ The tragic themes in the *Dream* 'are made comic by being put into the form of a dream ... [they] are stressful in the extreme; they are nightmares'.⁴⁷

Goldstein's principal argument for the existence of nightmare and the terror in the play comes when he analyses psychopathology, in particular in Helena's disturbing

⁴⁴ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 171.

⁴⁵ Compare 'the worst is not / So long as we can say "This is the worst"' (*King Lear*, 4.1.27-8).

⁴⁶ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 176.

⁴⁷ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 176.

experience. He also refers, as indeed he should, to Oberon's treatment of Titania:

Rejected for the boy, Oberon in his fury plans the crudest kind of revenge a man can take on a woman. He will 'make her full', not with child, but with 'hateful fantasies'. Since a man cannot be cuckolded by an animal, he makes Titania fall in love with an Ass, which has among the largest phalluses in the animal kingdom. This act of falling in love will not only debase her as a person but also cause her ultimate disappointment.⁴⁸

Although Puck appears to be just a servant following Oberon's orders, he obviously has a will of his own and makes mischief independently. Goldstein's portrait of Puck both captures his malign nature, and demonstrates very clearly Goldstein's approach to analysing the language of each character. Occasionally preferring the name Robin Goodfellow, Goldstein says that while he may be 'identified with the classical satyrs and fauns by other Elizabethan writers ... our good Robin was also associated with the Devil ... a devil [who] prevents the right parties from getting together'.⁴⁹ This is remarkably close to Jan Kott's 'devilish origin of Puck'.⁵⁰ However, Goldstein adds to his description: Puck is identified not only as a devil, but also as a torturer, a deceiver and, although Goldstein does not use the precise word, a trickster to all who come within his purview. Deception is his weapon. He is asked to help Helena by anointing the Athenian lover, but his help puts Helena as well as the other lovers into a worse position than they had been in before.

⁴⁸ Goldstein, 'Identity Crises', p. 175.

⁴⁹ Goldstein, 'Identity Crises', p. 173.

⁵⁰ Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, p. 213. Goldstein refers to Kott in a footnote, indicating the likelihood that Kott had some influence on him. I find no evidence that Puck has been portrayed as a devil in productions. The nearest portrayal, which is scarcely frightening, is a rather miscast Stanley Tucci, as a grey-haired, balding Puck with little horns in Michael Hoffman's 1998 film of the *Dream* (Twentieth Century Fox, 2002, 14252DVD).

The following is a fine example of the way Goldstein highlight's Puck's language. He provides an even fuller analysis than he usually does when discussing other characters' language, suggesting that in his research he must have been just as careful in his attention to their vocabulary:

[Puck's] animal imagery consists of beasts of nightmares: dragons, serpents, spirits, ghosts, goblins, monsters, villains, wolves. These creatures bedevil the human spirit. And the rest of Puck's vocabulary supports the thesis that he is the eliciter of fear and fright in the play. His verbs are *to wander, to whip, to lie, to lurk, to befall, to shame, to confound, to curse, to disturb, to exile, to forbid, to forsake, to sever, to be alone*. His nouns are *wars, woe, wretch, liar, shroud, burial, coward, fate, fears, floods, harbinger, duty, shadow, silence, stranger*. His adjectives are *weak, weary, wormy, yielding, hungry, jealous, knavish, mad (insane), barren, screeching, damned, dank, despised, headless*.⁵¹

This type of analysis of the text leaves an indelible impression of just how savage the play is, even if these words and phrases are interspersed with comedy and romance.

Goldstein writes: 'All of the major relationships in *AMND* are in different degrees of disrepair, and the interactions between all of the major characters in the play, at one time or another, are expressed in the language of torture'.⁵² He argues again that tragic themes are made comical by being put into the form of a dream. Goldstein might have added Freud's view, already discussed in this thesis, that a dream can easily be dismissed as

⁵¹ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 182-3. The italicised portion is original. His source for the statistical analyses is Melvin Spivack, *A Shakespeare Concordance*, Vol. 1 (Hildesheim, Germany: George Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968), and research by his students on the individual characters.

⁵² Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 180.

‘only a dream’, making it a good vehicle for disguised distress.⁵³ Here again there is an equation of a play and a dream, making a comedy a good vehicle for the disguise of distress – one of Goldstein’s basic propositions about the function of comedy.

The other ground upon which Goldstein bases his view that comedy is ‘terror in disguise’ is the description he gives of the intense mental suffering which some of the characters are subjected to in the wood. I identify this as the third strand of his article.

Goldstein: psychopathology

Psychoanalysis uses psychiatric terms in a rather special way. For example, while psychiatry has a formal description of paranoia, this is usually associated with a form of psychosis. Psychoanalysis uses the term much more generally and as a much more normal mental state: in Melanie Klein’s model of personal development, the ‘paranoid-schizoid position’ is a *normal* feature of the early weeks of life and of everyday life – it describes those times when we feel that things for the present are going against us, or when the outside world temporarily feels a hostile place.⁵⁴ Such language can easily be turned into a system of labels, which while acting as a pointer to another psychoanalyst of a mental process, can be understood wrongly outside the profession as an indication of severe mental illness, with all the implications associated with madness.⁵⁵

⁵³ The phrase first appears in a letter to Martha Bernays in 1884: ‘When writing your last letter you weren’t well either, for your foreboding is exactly like those nightmares that torture one only when one is suffering from indigestion. Then on waking one is relieved that it was only a dream’ (March 29, 1884; in E. L. Freud ed, *Letters of Sigmund Freud 1873-1939* (New York: Basic Books, 1961), p. 102. It is a phrase he uses over the years in various essays a further 17 times.

⁵⁴ D. Meltzer, ‘The Paranoid-Schizoid and Depressive Positions’, in Meg Harris Williams ed. *Adolescence: Talks and Papers by Donald Meltzer and Martha Harris*, (London: Karnac Books, 2011), pp. 103-116. A similar problem for the lay person arises with Klein’s ‘depressive position’: this sounds like ‘depression’, but it is in fact ‘a value system in which the health, security and happiness of the object prevail’ (Meltzer, p. 108).

⁵⁵ See my concern about labelling in ‘Naming and labelling’, in M. Jacobs, *Our Desire of Unrest* (London: Karnac, 2009), pp. 33-52.

At the time Goldstein was writing Klein's theories were not favoured in America. But the same caution that is necessary in understanding her diagnostic terms needs to be applied to the use of Freudian diagnostic categories, which Goldstein employs in his treatment of three of the lovers. Not that this is peculiar to Goldstein: he cites with approval the literary critic Raeburn Miller, who suggests that even when the lovers are not under the influence of the love-juice, their perceptions are grossly distorted, disfigurements, and a form of schizophrenia.⁵⁶ Schizophrenia is normally understood to be a severe mental illness where the patient has lost touch with reality. I imagine that Miller in using the phrase 'form of schizophrenia' is not suggesting actual schizophrenia (a severe mental condition), but rather that the lovers temporarily lose sight of reality, in the same way that a dreamer does.

I can illustrate this by examining the way Goldstein handles Helena's language. If any of the characters should have an identity crisis, it is understandably her. The night may not be a good experience for any of the four lovers, but for Helena it is perhaps the most frightening nightmare – rejected by Demetrius, then pursued by Demetrius and Lysander; and finally scorned by her closest friend. No wonder she does not know who she is. But in addition to her 'identity crisis', Goldstein attaches two psychopathological labels. The first, typified in Helena's 'double cherry' speech (3.2.192-219) appears when Goldstein states that this is 'the language of the paranoid'. He instances words such as '*counterfeit, folly, rare, sport (freak), different, animal, puppet, ugly, mockery, confederate, foul, partition (dismember), disfigure, imprint, curst, unnatural, base, vile*', all terms used by

⁵⁶ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 190. His reference is to Raeburn Miller, 'The persons of Moonshine: a Midsummer-Night's Dream and the 'disfigurement' of realities', in Rima Drell Reck ed., *Explorations of Literature* (Baton Rouge, La.; Louisiana State University Press, 1966), pp. 25-31.

Helena and emphasising the grotesqueness of her experience.⁵⁷

What degree of serious disturbance does Goldstein mean by using the term ‘paranoid’?

It seems to me that Helena’s reactions to what is happening to her seem reasonable;

paranoia, meanwhile, suggests the absence of reason. According to Goldstein it is

Helena who dominates Act 3, scene 2, experiencing ‘the three lovers as attackers of her

very being, and as is usual with a paranoid, there is no winning through reason and

logic’.⁵⁸ As an example of reasoning with her Goldstein instances Lysander’s

justification for his sudden attraction to Helena when he says to her: ‘reason says you are

the worthier maid’ (LYSANDER, 2.2.122). But there is nothing rational or logical about

such a statement. When Demetrius wakes after the love-juice has been applied to his

eyes and declares his love for Helena, she responds, ‘O spite! O hell! I see you all are

bent / To set against me for your merriment’ (HELENA, 3.2.145-6). It is again reasonable

that Helena should think, in Goldstein’s words, ‘they have hatched a plot, the two of

them, against her’.⁵⁹ When Helena says of herself: ‘I am ugly as a bear, / For beasts that

meet me run away for fear’ (2.2.101), Goldstein does not see this as an understandable

reaction – for him this supports his view of her paranoia.⁶⁰ Yet to think of herself as such

provides a legitimate reason for Demetrius’s rejection of her. These and other occasions

suggest that Goldstein lacks empathy for what the character of Helena is going through.

So when Lysander wakes and declares his love for her, she does not question Lysander’s

change of heart, but reasonably assumes his intentions are dishonourable. Goldstein

writes of this as if it is a fault – yet how else can she respond, knowing Lysander’s

previous feelings for Hermia?

⁵⁷ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 196.

⁵⁸ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 185.

⁵⁹ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 185.

⁶⁰ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, pp. 184-5.

Paranoia is therefore too strong a description of her state of mind. If Helena's nightmare is that nothing seems logical anymore, then that is a reasonable thing to feel. Dreams are illogical. As Freud writes: 'absurdity in a dream signifies the presence in the dream-thoughts of *contradiction, ridicule and derision*'.⁶¹ Helena tries to make sense of it in the only way she can. The only 'logical' conclusion is that they *have* hatched a plot against her. Goldstein does not need to use a psychopathological label to describe her situation.

A second psychopathological term is introduced when Goldstein interprets Hermia's insult to Helena, that she is 'a painted maypole' (HERMIA, 3.2.296). To him this indicates that Helena is to be viewed as a transvestite – the maypole is the phallus, rather than the more accepted meaning of a tall skinny person; and 'painted' is a term used for a woman using cosmetics.⁶² But since Goldstein's second basic proposition in his paper is that 'at all times all meanings are there and our unconscious may, if sufficiently free, associate with many of these meanings simultaneously', then there is in his terms reason to suppose a Freudian interpretation of the maypole.⁶³ In the course of Act 3.2, Helena 'admits defeat and says "To Athens will I bear my folly back" [l. 315]; that is, she gives up her hopes of a lover, for a transvestite is a "folly". By the end of the scene, she has lost everything. Her paranoia', which Goldstein typically associates with homosexuality, 'is all-encompassing'.⁶⁴

While therefore it may be reasonable for a Freudian critic to emphasise the double-meaning of some of the words that Helena and Hermia speak, there are alternative

⁶¹ Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 662 (original emphasis).

⁶² Peter Holland, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 203.

⁶³ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 172.

⁶⁴ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 197.

explanations for his label 'transvestite'. He does not consider that this is metaphorical language and that boys playing women in Elizabethan theatre could have led to such a gibe. If the reference to transvestism is a possible gloss, this could be more related to such cross-dressing on the Elizabethan stage than to the character of Helena herself. It is a feature of many psychoanalytic interpretations that they seldom consider theatrical conventions at the time the plays were written. In that Goldstein is not alone. Nor do psychoanalytic critics of one Shakespearean play often cross-refer to other plays in support of their interpretations: Goldstein could have supported his interpretation of Helena's transvestism by referring to her namesake in *All's Well That Ends Well*, who adopts male attire.

Goldstein's way of psychopathologising transvestism was typical of the time he wrote. For example, a 1965 paper on transvestism typifies the contemporary psychiatric climate when it is defined as: 'Overt passive homosexual wishes in male transvestites are often intolerable ... Marked projection which becomes clinically manifested as a paranoid state'.⁶⁵ This is identical to the connection Goldstein makes between Helena's paranoia and her transvestism. Compare Nancy Chodorow forty years later: 'In the contemporary period ... [there is] an awareness of the multiple constituents of individual genders and sexualities, and modern, relying on clinical evidence and rooting for the individual'.⁶⁶ While Goldstein of course reflects the psychoanalytic fashion of his day, I suspect that in order to support his notion of the play as disguising terror, he needed to exaggerate the importance of the psychiatric label.

⁶⁵ M. M. Segal, 'Transvestitism as an impulse and as a defence', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 46 (1965), p. 214.

⁶⁶ N. Chodorow, 'Gender on the modern-postmodern and classical-relational divide: untangling history and epistemology', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 53 (2005), pp. 1114-5.

Goldstein shows a determination to prove his diagnosis of Helena. He quotes in full what he describes as ‘the most fantastical of Helena’s speeches’ (3.2.192-219), which recalls her sisterly relationship with Hermia. Here ‘she couples reality with unreality; she relives a part of her life with Hermia and tries to recall Hermia’s earlier acceptance of her, however “unnatural” she was’.⁶⁷ There is, however, no evidence of their relationship being ‘unnatural’. Goldstein interprets this speech as having sexual implications, and as showing a longing for togetherness, suggesting Helena might be viewed as an androgyne – he finds that she uses twice as many adjectives in respect of the wish for closeness as she does those adjectives that describe her sense of isolation. He takes the word ‘partition’ in the double-cherry reference (HELENA, 3.2.210) to mean ‘dismemberment’, equivalent to castration. Goldstein thinks that the reason for Helena’s transvestism is that she is looking for some explanation that she has been rejected by Demetrius, and that that is why she is mocked by all three of the other lovers:

In her paranoia, she declares she has discovered the source of her rejection. She has always been a male, not a female; that is, she has been impersonating a female all her life; rejected for no apparent reason by her lover and made fun of by her closest friend, she concludes her ‘true identity’ has been discovered and she accepts as one who is guilty of being a ‘counterfeit’ the just punishment due her.⁶⁸

It is not clear whether Goldstein means that *Helena* thinks she is a transvestite androgyne, or whether *he* thinks it. It is curious that he eventually concludes, when discussing Oberon’s epilogue, that: ‘Helena is not a transvestite after all’, which

⁶⁷ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 186.

⁶⁸ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 203. This is an appended note, although a very significant one, and not part of the main essay.

suggests a miraculous change.⁶⁹ Goldstein unnecessarily turns a moving speech about the loss of the close and sisterly friendship between Helena and Hermia (on top of the treatment of Helena by Lysander and Demetrius) into a psychologically disordered lament, obscuring the reality of the pain that she feels.

Although Goldstein gives little attention to Hippolyta and Titania, when he does so he continues to focus on transvestism. Goldstein stresses the maleness of the Amazon woman, whose removed breast makes her ‘less than a complete woman, [and] remains with her always. Her height, too, is that of a male, and her stature is no small link to the very tall Helena’.⁷⁰ This is an interpretation that is on stronger ground since ‘Amazon’ was Elizabethan code for ‘gender ambivalent’. He might have alluded here to the androgynous Elizabeth, with whom a number of literary critics associate the play’s genesis: ‘I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too’.⁷¹ When Goldstein suggests that Titania’s possessiveness of the Indian boy constitutes her identity crisis, this threatens the prospect of similar transvestism for the Indian boy. And in a footnote he links Hermia’s name to Hermes and on that basis (a male as well as a female name) sees her too as an hermaphrodite.⁷²

I find it strange that Goldstein adopts a less diagnostic attitude to the male characters. There is almost a sense of the women in the play being psychologically the weaker sex, a temptation in classical psychoanalysis, where there is an ambivalence about whether

⁶⁹ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 195.

⁷⁰ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 189.

⁷¹ Harold Brooks, for example, writes: ‘It seems likely Queen Elizabeth was present when the *Dream* was first acted’ (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, (London: Methuen, 1979), p. lv); and Louis Montrose supports this (‘A kingdom of shadows’, in D. Kehler ed. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream: Critical Essays* (London: Routledge, 2001) p. 226).

⁷² Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 204.

women are more passive than men.⁷³ He does portray Demetrius as an hysteric, in that he is stubborn and resistant to facing issues squarely; and like a narcissistic person, he is egocentric. He analyses the 109 sentences spoken by Demetrius: 46 of his sentences ‘contain a self-reference in the form of personal, first person possessive adjectives and personal pronouns’.⁷⁴ Nearly a quarter of his sentences include an imperative, a further distinguishing feature of a narcissist. Even when he wakes from his ‘dream’ he dismisses the feelings he had for Hermia as like melting snow or a bauble, and when he adds the terms ‘object’ and ‘pleasure’ with reference to Helena he de-personalises both of the young women (DEMETRIUS, 4.1.163-173).

It is possible that Goldstein’s description of Demetrius as an hysteric represents an aspect of a classical psychoanalytic and psychiatric set of diagnostic categories that had not yet given way, in some quarters in America in the late 1970s, to the use of narcissism as a more typical description of an egocentric person.⁷⁵ Quite why Goldstein is more generous towards Lysander in this respect, whom he suggests remains constant, is curious, since like Demetrius towards Helena before the play begins, he rejects Hermia. Perhaps Goldstein could blame the love-juice for that.

My own conclusion from Goldstein’s evidence of the language of the characters he discusses here is that the play does indeed portray a nightmare situation for the lovers in the wood – each in their own way is caught up in a situation partly of their own making, partly forced upon them by Puck’s mishandled interventions. If the scenes have

⁷³ Freud writes of ‘the general antithesis that exists between activity and passivity, masculinity and femininity. But this gives us no right to assume that only one of them is primary ...’ (‘Female Sexuality’, 1931, *Standard Edition*, Volume XXI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1961), p. 224). Psychoanalysis early on treated women as equal to men professionally, with women well represented among its influential pioneers.

⁷⁴ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 192.

⁷⁵ I discuss the value of a narcissistic interpretation of the male lovers further in chapter 4.

something of the nature of a farce, this disguises the pain of rejection, which all four experience. Whether this goes as far as ‘terror’, and whether there really is so much psychopathology of this more extreme nature is much more questionable.

Goldstein: an assessment

Since the interpretation of identity crises, of comedy disguising serious themes, and of the midsummer nightmare are such strong points in Goldstein’s article, it is surprising that Goldstein’s article is never referred to in subsequent psychoanalytic criticism of the play. A brief abstract of his article appears in a different psychoanalytic journal two years later, without comment, but otherwise it sinks without trace. Goldstein’s article admittedly appears in a journal that is less likely to be noticed by literary critics, although Shirley Nelson Garner twice refers to him in footnotes as one of the male critics who are judgmental about Titania.⁷⁶ He deserves a wider readership.

Goldstein’s over-arching theory of ‘identity crises’ in the representation of the characters has much to be said for it. The weakness of his paper is that he does not make more of these crises being normal developmental changes that take place when, for example, children make the transition from attachment to parent to attachment to partner (Hermia, Egeus and Lysander), when couples have to learn to adjust to each other (Theseus and Hippolyta), when children come between a couple (Oberon and Titania), or when rivals compete for the affection of another (Lysander and Demetrius). The play could well be read as a study of what one analyst calls ‘the maturational processes’.⁷⁷ Such transitions

⁷⁶ Shirley Nelson Garner, ‘*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: ‘Jack shall have Jill; Nought shall go ill’’, *Women’s Studies*, 9.1 (1981), pp. 61-2.

⁷⁷ D. W. Winnicott, *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (London: The Hogarth Press), 1965).

are not free from stress, and the distress can at times have a nightmare quality. In the tragedies these transitions lead to nightmarish conclusions, but the comedies suggest hope, and the issues raised through the play achieve what appears to be a sense of resolution.

I read the wood into which the lovers flee as fulfilling the function of Erikson's moratorium. This view is less extreme than that of Goldstein, who sees the flight into the wood as a wish to escape from reality – an identity crisis that leads to a flight from reality into mental illness. I prefer to see their identity crisis as developmental along the lines of Erik Erikson's view of a psycho-social moratorium in adolescence, a period when young people can flounder and explore identity issues on the way to forming their own more assured identity.⁷⁸ Erikson's model of personal development, which I discuss below as one of the possible influences on Goldstein, includes the notion that an identity crisis – a threat and an opportunity – is a means to transformation. In current Western society Erikson sees the moratorium in adolescence as socially sanctioned; in the *Dream* the moratorium is seized by the young people, defying the Athenian psycho-social norms. But it serves the same purpose. Goldstein's idea of the lovers' wish to escape from reality is too close to a definition of mental illness, which I question in the same way as I question Goldstein's identification of hysteria in Demetrius and paranoia in Helena. Helena and Demetrius – as well as Hermia and Lysander who largely escape Goldstein's attention – certainly go through an identity crisis in the wood: my own view is that they need to negotiate this in working towards a more mature adult identity, relatively free of parental influence.

⁷⁸ E. H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, p. 254 (originally published in America in 1950).

In later criticism, Thomas MacCary's study of Shakespearean comedy (1985) comes close to the main strand of Goldstein's interpretation. An American professor of classical and comparative literature, including psychoanalysis, MacCary observes that much psychoanalytic criticism of the play has been based upon oedipal situations, but proposes as a different way of analysing the comedies that they are concerned with identity: 'Love in Shakespeare, as in life, is not an idle entertainment, but a compulsive attempt to establish identity'.⁷⁹ There is no evidence that MacCary knew of Goldstein's 1973 paper, yet his theory had already been illustrated well by Goldstein in his examination of the nightmare experience in the identity crises of many of the characters in the *Dream*. Since there was a focus on identity from about 1980 in early modern criticism, MacCary might be expected to write in these terms: Goldstein had however anticipated this development.

Goldstein's is the first psychoanalytic paper after Weston Gui's to give such detailed attention to the play, and it is worth comparing the two.⁸⁰ The strength in Goldstein's paper lies in his close analysis of the speech of the play's characters. If it is legitimate to attempt to describe the state of mind of a fictional character in drama then interpretation can only be made on the basis of what he or she says. There are few soliloquies in the play, and no stage directions that reveal either what a character may be thinking or about non-verbal expressions that an actor should convey; therefore the close attention Goldstein gives to the precise words a character speaks is absolutely necessary. While I have expressed my doubts about using diagnostic labels without qualification, he does not usually force too much meaning into those words. A noticeable difference between himself and Gui is that he does not make assumptions about a character's 'back-story'.

⁷⁹ W. Thomas MacCary, *Friends and Lovers*. His treatment of love in the *Dream* is included in chapter 4 of this thesis.

⁸⁰ For Gui, see chapter 1.

Even if Helena as a transvestite is a strange deduction, Goldstein attempts to base his justification for this on various phrases she actually speaks.

To compensate for the sparseness of psycho-biographical material psychoanalytic historians and critics (as indeed clinicians too) can fall back on attempting their own explanations of how the past has influenced (or might influence) the present. Some analysts are more forthright in this than others. Thus Freud and Jones build up a picture of what might have been causing Hamlet to delay the revenge his father's ghost asked of him. The reason for the delay is not the obvious one – waiting for the right moment – but in Freud's view must lie in the past, in the wishes of the child Hamlet to replace his father in his mother's bed. This is what Gui does with Bottom: Bottom, or rather Shakespeare since Bottom is a kind of alter ego, must have felt excluded from his mother's breast when Gilbert was born, and struggled with rivalry ever since. This presumed history influences Gui's whole interpretation of the present action of the play.

Goldstein does not on the whole adopt such a method of understanding character. He is mainly empathic to what the present feelings and thoughts of the lovers might be, faced as they are with parental injunctions and shifting love-objects. He uses the text as his guide, indeed much more thoroughly than Gui, who himself cites much in support of his argument.⁸¹ Goldstein's interpretations could be played by an actor without any additional text, or more importantly without any psychoanalytic inventiveness. But Gui's 'production' would involve a programme note on why Bottom is sleeping and why he is dreaming from the end of Act 1 until he wakes from his vision.

⁸¹ Although less empathic, as I have argued above, to Helena.

If there is terror, it is well disguised. Goldstein, in pursuit of his objective, could have identified other expressions that would have served his title. He does not refer to the equally terrifying threat of death that is apparent in Theseus's judgment upon Hermia, one of the possible punishments for standing against her father's will (THESEUS, 1.1.65). Punishment also hangs over the mechanicals as they perform their play lest they frighten the ladies (QUINCE AND THE REST, 1.2.67-70). Hermia fears she has had her heart consumed by a serpent (3.1.155). Lysander and Demetrius come close to a fight to the death (LYSANDER, 3.2.336). Death is enacted in the artisans' play. As Kott observes, the words 'death' and 'dead' are uttered 28 times, while 'dying' and 'die' occur 14 times, 'kill' and 'killing' 13 times and sickness 6 times; whereas 'kiss' and 'kissing' occur only 6 times, 'joy' 8 times, and 'happy' 6 times.⁸² There is a juxtaposition of death and love in the *Dream* – what in Freudian terms has been described as the conflict between Eros and Thanatos. There is the possibility of much greater darkness in the play than Goldstein actually evidences. In addition to drawing upon Freud's writing on humour as disguising less socially acceptable feelings and thoughts, his argument of terror and nightmare would have benefitted from Freud's theory of the dynamics of aggression, the death instinct turned outwards towards others. Goldstein's is nevertheless already a long article, and there is a limit on how much can be encompassed in the space available in a journal.

Psychoanalytic critics of the play appear to have avoided Goldstein's darker interpretation of the play. Even in Goldstein all ends happily: 'All the identity crises depicted in both the scenes and the various nightmares earlier have been resolved'.⁸³ The only other evidence in psychoanalytic criticism is briefly expressed in Margaret and

⁸² Kott, *The Bottom Translation* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1987), p. 55.

⁸³ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 195.

Michael Rustin's treatment of the play in their 2002 book: they stress that 'it is important that the violent and dangerous states of mind that are explored ... are not wholly buried beneath their playful surfaces'; there are 'serious themes at the heart of the play'.⁸⁴ The *Dream*, like *Romeo and Juliet*, explores the same issues of love and marriage, the one a tragedy and the other a comedy. Shakespeare's comedies explore 'what might have been' as much as the tragedies do, but with a different ending. The Rustins see the quarrel between Oberon and Titania as not only infecting the natural world around them, but as changing human relationships as well, an interesting extension beyond the usual critical emphasis on nature alone: it has turned Demetrius against Helena, so that in the wood their relationship becomes sado-masochistic (DEMETRIUS AND HELENA, 2.1.194-218). It has reinforced Egeus's patriarchal authority. Furthermore, 'Oberon's magical interventions ... lead to the exploration of the idea of love as a form of madness and, more subtly, to the idea that love exposes us to terrors that make us feel mad'.⁸⁵ Like Goldstein before them, they specifically instance Helena's 'hell of paranoia' (HELENA, 3.2.145-161 and 3.2.192-202). They underline the 'murderous spite' between Hermia and Helena, the physical aggression shown by the men: 'the fusion of sexual and aggressive impulses described by Freud as so necessary for adult and sexual life has split apart'.⁸⁶

They provide many examples of the dark side of the play – the 'violent and dangerous states of mind'. Nevertheless they describe the conclusion of the play as 'a moment of rest in the tortuous rhythms of love', although even the phrase 'moment of rest' suggests something

⁸⁴ Margaret Rustin and Michael Rustin, *Mirror to Nature*, p. 95. Margaret Rustin is a child psychotherapist and Michael Rustin a sociologist, but a Visiting Professor at the Tavistock Clinic, London, one of the leading institutions for psychoanalytic theory and practice.

⁸⁵ Rustin and Rustin, *Mirror to Nature*, pp. 101-4.

⁸⁶ Rustin and Rustin, *Mirror to Nature*, p. 105.

temporary.⁸⁷ When they discuss the relationship between Titania and Bottom, the Rustins see Titania as the doting mother wishing to satisfy the longing of her baby, as Gui did fifty years earlier in his interpretation of Bottom's dream. For the Rustins it is this evocation of her maternal love that is 'the prelude to her waking recognition that it is Oberon she loves as a husband, and that her love for Bottom and the changeling boy were confusions, "the fierce vexation of a dream"' (OBERON, 4.1.68).⁸⁸ Like Goldstein, they see *Pyramus and Thisbe* as revealing 'the terrors that lovers must overcome if they are to find each other'.⁸⁹ This carries the sense of being an ongoing process.

Madness, terror and violence are seen as an essential part of 'catastrophic change [which] is experienced both as a positive space in which growth and development might be possible and as an explosive threat of annihilation, virtually at the same time'.⁹⁰ It is a position that most psychoanalysis takes, that however dreadful a person's experience, it always holds the seeds of personal growth. Freud's pessimism (or is it realism?) about human nature tends to give way in his followers to optimism about the value of psychoanalysis as a therapy (scarcely surprising when that is how they earn a living). It is possible that it is difficult for the psychoanalytic critic to sustain an interpretation of terror for long: not just the play, but also their own philosophy demands that a dark interpretation is subsumed by a more positive and optimistic response.

⁸⁷ Rustin and Rustin, *Mirror to Nature*, p. 112.

⁸⁸ Rustin and Rustin, *Mirror to Nature*, p. 106.

⁸⁹ Rustin and Rustin, *Mirror to Nature*, p. 108 and p. 96.

⁹⁰ Rustin and Rustin, *Mirror to Nature*, p. 108n, original emphasis. The phrase 'catastrophic change' comes from the work of the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion, who believed that emotional growth was accompanied by fear of catastrophe. One commentator unpacks the phrase: 'psychic change and emotional growth require an encounter with that which is truly new and unknown, the latter may have the status of inchoate, chaotic, disorganised, and potentially disorganising beta-elements, which must be contained and transformed before new representations can be created. In such circumstances, change and growth may be seen as requiring an encounter with the unknown that may well feel or even loom as catastrophic and destabilizing' (H.B. Levine, 'Reflections on catastrophic change', *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 18 (2009), p. 78).

Goldstein in context

A number of aspects could have influenced Goldstein's rather different and darker psychoanalytic reading of the play. America in 1973 was in many ways different from the 1950s when the general mood had been optimistic and part of the backdrop to Gui's contribution to psychoanalytic criticism. The 1960s had seen the assassination of two Kennedys and Martin Luther King, with the Vietnam War escalating and finally ending disastrously in the 1970s. A whole generation of young men were marked by their experience of the draft. The Civil Rights movement, with its racial tensions and violence, gained further momentum. Within weeks of Richard Nixon's inauguration for his second term as President he was closely identified with the Watergate scandal. The Cold War showed no sign of abating, and an energy crisis was looming. It is worth noting that the horror film *The Exorcist* was the highest grossing film in 1973; and I can only count 16 comedies, musicals or romantic films among the nearly 130 films released in the States that year.⁹¹ It was a time of ferment, as pressure for the rights of women and the movement for racial equality advanced and became even more vocal. It is to that time that must be traced the birth of Stonewall and the gay movement. There was a growing counter-culture, particularly among the young, with differing interpretations of the American Dream.⁹²

Although Freud's theory of the death drive was the one aspect of his work that was most heavily criticised within psychoanalysis, the theory was re-visited in two books that were influential in American culture: Herbert Marcuse's 1955 *Eros and Civilization*, and, attracting attention at the time even if less well known today, Norman Brown's

⁹¹ '1973 in film' (en.wikipedia.org, consulted May 10th 2016).

⁹² J. R. Greene, *America in the Sixties* (Syracuse, New York, Syracuse University Press, 2010); Peter B. Levy, *America in the Sixties – Right, Left and Center* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998) – chapter 2 is headed 'The end of American innocence'; Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

1959 *Life Against Death*.⁹³ A contemporaneous article sums up their re-working of Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*:

Brown and Marcuse explore the radical implications of Freud's breakthrough ... by following psychoanalytical insights to their farther conclusions, their recital of the repressive, indeed *diseased*, bases of past and existing civilizations, is itself gloomy in the extreme – perhaps even more gloomy than Freud's own vision.⁹⁴

Although only Brown's book is referred to by one psychoanalytic critic of the play, Mordecai Marcus, and not by Goldstein, Marcuse and Brown demonstrate a critical view of the optimism of 1950s American society, which by the time of Goldstein's article is reflected in Christopher Lasch's 1970s view of the deterioration of American culture and politics.⁹⁵

If this was the cultural background to those writing at that time, there was also the influence on Goldstein of a wide sweep of critical literature about the *Dream*, to which he refers in his notes: C. L. Barber, Helen Gardner, studies of Ovid, and Norman Holland as well as a broad range of psychoanalytic literature.⁹⁶ Up to that point there had been little psychoanalytic interpretation of the *Dream*, but Goldstein refers obliquely to Gui's paper and to Gerald Jacobson's analysis of the female Oedipus complex in the play.⁹⁷ What is striking is that his is one of the few examples in psychoanalytic criticism

⁹³ Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: a philosophical inquiry into Freud* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1955); Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*, (London: Routledge, 1959).

⁹⁴ R. Endleman, 'Reflections on the human revolution', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 53B (1966), p.22.

⁹⁵ Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979).

⁹⁶ Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*; Helen Gardner, *Shakespearean and Other Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Walter Staton, 'Ovidian elements in A Midsummer Night's Dream', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 26 (1963), pp. 165-70; Norman Holland, *The Dynamics of Literary Response* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

⁹⁷ G. F. Jacobson, 'A note on Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream"', pp. 21-6.

on the play to refer to Jan Kott, whose *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary* had been published in English in 1964.⁹⁸ I refer to Kott's chapter on the play below. Kott's influence on these darker interpretations of the play is an important question, even if one that is not easily answered, although Goldstein is critical of Kott in a number of ways. For example, he differs from Kott's view that the lovers are interchangeable, instead giving particular and distinctive attention to each of them. And in a footnote Goldstein writes:

Jan Kott's interpretation of sexual, demoniac, and animalistic elements in *AMND* is successful in a limited way. Kott's point that the play has these elements is well taken, but he never moves beyond this declaration ... What Kott does particularly well is to document his thesis that the play is 'truthful, brutal, and violent'.⁹⁹

If nothing else it appears that Kott's book could have set Goldstein on a particular course, as shown in the title of his article, where he describes the play as representing both terror and nightmare.

Psychoanalysis in some quarters in America was finding an identity in some respects distinct from its European origins. The European émigrés were adjusting to a different culture, with post-Freudians such as Erik Erikson, and neo-Freudians such as Erich Fromm, recognising that differences in cultures and sub-cultures played their own part in psychological development and attitudes. While in the 1970s self psychology – the development of the elements that constitute the sense of self – was only just receiving attention amongst psychoanalysts and challenging Freudian orthodoxy, the work of Erik

⁹⁸ Goldstein says in a footnote (p. 200) that he came across Kott's book when it was published in the States in 1966.

⁹⁹ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 200. Kott's essay *The Bottom Translation*, with an even darker position on the play than his chapter in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, had not been published when Goldstein wrote, even though Kott indicates it must have been originally written around the same time.

Erikson on identity was already well-known. His *Identity, Youth and Crisis* was published in 1968, while his earlier *Childhood and Society* had challenged the ego-psychology with its focus only on the individual psyche.¹⁰⁰ Given Goldstein's title 'Identity crises' it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he must have known of and been influenced by Erikson's writing, in which the term 'identity crisis' was first given currency. Erikson's work was probably more popular outside psychoanalysis, where his books were well received both in America and Britain. He was not so well received within the American psychoanalytic establishment.¹⁰¹ This may be the reason he is not given a mention anywhere in Goldstein's paper.

Instead of psycho-sexual stages as in Freud, Erikson introduced the idea of psychosocial stages of a person's life. 'Identity crisis' is particularly related to adolescence, where Erikson believes that a young man or woman's psycho-social task is to find their own identity: for example, instead of seeing themselves as 'my parent's son/daughter' a young person who has successfully negotiated this stage of life is able to say 'I am me'; identity also includes gender orientation, sexuality, career or work identity, as well as a personal philosophy. Erikson had written about the stage of adolescence: 'The adolescent mind is essentially a mind of the *moratorium*, a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult'.¹⁰² It is this moratorium that I have suggested above aptly describes the experience of the lovers in the wood. But Erikson is misunderstood if he is seen as demarcating strict psycho-social stages, each with their own set of psychological tasks. It is not just adolescents who have identity crises. An identity crisis can also be

¹⁰⁰ E. H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*; E. H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*.

¹⁰¹ Could it be that Erikson was diluting the emphasis on the psycho-sexual, and that the popularisation of his version of Freud was felt to be threatening to the identity of psychoanalysis?

¹⁰² E. H. Erikson, 'The eight ages of man', *International Journal of Psychiatry*, 2 (1966), p. 290. As suggested above, the midsummer night in the wood is a kind of moratorium.

triggered by change of job, entering or leaving an intimate relationship, losses, changes of philosophical outlook, and other such circumstances. Erikson's interest in the whole question of identity formation therefore supports Goldstein's fascinating descriptions of the different identity crises experienced by the other characters in the play, not just the adolescent lovers.

Critical opinion is divided as to whether the play is as raw as Kott and others have suggested, but there has been even greater division of opinion has been around controversial productions of the play. Examples of the darker interpretation of the *Dream* are seen in certain theatrical productions, particularly in America. Whether or not these influenced Goldstein, or indeed he was influenced by Freud or Kott, they certainly run in parallel with Goldstein himself. Some of these productions, before Goldstein wrote, are not actually recorded by Jay Halio, despite his exhaustive survey of theatrical and film versions of the *Dream*.¹⁰³

A production described as outdoing Kott was staged in the 1967-8 season in Greenwich Village, New York, directed by John Hancock. The play opened on a juke box playing the Mendelssohn music as a procession of corpses moved on to the stage, and it was set in a city haunted by the plague. Theseus and Oberon were doubled by the same actor to indicate that the magic world and the court were diseased, demonic and corrupt. One

¹⁰³ It is interesting to watch Max Reinhardt's 1935 film of the *Dream* available on a Korean DVD, it being the only way of seeing the type of productions that tended to prevail before the 1960s. But while there are countless fairies in gossamer wafting across the screen, and frequent reflections of tinsel and stardust, Oberon is portrayed as a dark figure, and he has followers with bat-like wings. There are hints of Murnau's *Nosferatu*, and scenes more usually associated with the later Hammer horror films. The scenes in the wood are also shot in semi-darkness, adding to the sense of foreboding. Similarly dark, and with rather terrifying gothic supporters both of a Oberon and of Titania appear in the BBC 2016 TV film of the *Dream*, directed by David Kerr. The script by T. Russell Davies resembles a Dr Who episode and is in places a complete re-working of the text (e.g. Hippolyta says nothing in Act 5, whereas Helena utters one line. See also Chapter 1, n. 178 on Hippolyta's fate in various productions, including Kerr's.

review described the production as ‘brutal, vulgar and erotic’.¹⁰⁴ Michael Mullin refers to two other such productions in the same year: Ariane Mnouchkine’s ‘cruel and brutal psychodrama’, and John Hirsch’s experiment with the ‘more disturbing elements of the play’ at Stratford, Ontario.¹⁰⁵

Before Goldstein was writing, but surely being discussed in literary and theatrical circles was Peter Brook’s production of the play in 1970. It is often cited as the first production that challenged the notion of the play as a light comedy or a ‘pretty toy’.¹⁰⁶ It caused a great stir when first staged. As Halio writes: ‘But nothing – nothing – could have prepared the world for what followed in 1970: the *Dream* of Peter Brook’.¹⁰⁷ Reading Brook’s thoughts on the play, it is difficult at this distance to see why there was such an outcry. He describes the play’s principal theme as love, and he particularly praises the love of the artisans in their wish to play before Theseus: ‘they set themselves to their task with such love that the meaning of their clumsy efforts changes before our eyes’.¹⁰⁸ If anything, it is the sneering of the court of which Brook is most critical. Halio’s account of the production demonstrates its circus-like atmosphere – with Chinese acrobat costumes, juggling, a spinning plate, and trapezes. One critic thought that Brook had actually re-sentimentalised what Kott had desentimentalised.¹⁰⁹

Brook was a friend of Kott’s: he wrote the preface to *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary*; yet his version of the play was not as dark as Kott describes it. Maher thinks that there

¹⁰⁴ *Cue Magazine*, 1967 – an early equivalent of *Time Out*.

¹⁰⁵ Cited by Mary Maher, ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream: nightmare or gentle snooze?’, in Dorothea Kehler ed. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p. 431 and p. 447.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Lewis, ‘Fairy fantasy or erotic nightmare’, p. 251. The phrase was used in Madeleine Doran’s introduction to the Pelican edition of the *Dream* (1959).

¹⁰⁷ Jay Halio, *Shakespeare in Performance: A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, second ed. 2003), p.48.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Brook, *The Shifting Point* (London: Methuen Drama, 1989), p. 100.

¹⁰⁹ Halio, *Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 69.

was a world of difference between Brook's and Kott's interpretations of the love scene between Titania and Bottom: Brook treated the incident with relish and humor ... whereas Kott saw violence and victimization'.¹¹⁰ Yet there is another way of looking at Brook's production, which is that, in Freud's and Goldstein's phrase, the circus-like setting *disguises* the nightmare side of the play. The nightmare is shown in a musical score that was often discordant, and sometimes sinister; and in 'the struggles between and among the Athenians [which] are extremely vigorous, sexual, and even vicious'.¹¹¹ What seems like farce to the audience is something else for 'the principals, who show their anguish and despair'.¹¹²

Brook himself observes that Lysander behaves in 'a quite disgusting way' towards Hermia, as if the love-juice has released his 'natural tendencies', so that 'he not only jilts her but his love is transformed into violent hate ... denouncing the girl with the kind of vehemence that ... led people to burn one another at the stake'.¹¹³ The most explicit and at the time shocking dramatic gesture in Brook's production was the straight-arm phallus being thrust into the air when Bottom coupled with Titania, an apparent reference to the huge penis of an ass, echoing Kott's view of the play's bestial eroticism. Sex is seen as nightmarish. But Maher observes that even when an actor's arm was thrust up between Bottom and Titania, this was greeted in Brook's production with joy and amazement. It takes a censor to turn this or indeed other stark expressions of sexuality 'nightmarish' – whether it is an external censor such as the one-time Lord Chamberlain's office, or the individual's harsh super-ego.

¹¹⁰ Maher, 'Nightmare or gentle snooze?' p. 432.

¹¹¹ Halio, *Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 64.

¹¹² Halio, *Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 66.

¹¹³ Brook, *The Shifting Point*, p. 99.

It is not clear that Brook was necessarily influenced by Kott, but was he influenced by psychoanalytic ideas? By the 1970s it is impossible to distinguish Freudian ideas as a general cultural influence from any specific intention to stage a Freudian version of the play. Brook himself writes in the context of the *Dream*, perhaps somewhat disingenuously: 'We should first of all try to rediscover the play as a living thing; then we shall be able to analyse our discoveries. Once I have finished working on the play, I can begin to produce my theories'.¹¹⁴ Brook is his own man, and his style of directing was such that from the first day of rehearsal he promoted 'an ensemble exchange of every kind of awareness, amongst a cast alive to the whole play's range and radiance'.¹¹⁵

It may be just as difficult to measure how much impact Brook's production had on those that followed. A programme note for the 1995 RSC production at the Barbican Centre attributes 'greater awareness of the play's darker elements' to the impact of Brook's *Dream*.¹¹⁶ As for explicit reference to psychoanalytic ideas, Halio records that in Robert Lepage's *Dream* in 1992 'the ghosts of Freud and Jung inhabited the production ... and quotations from Jung, anthropologists, and Freudians psychologists as well as Kott appeared in the programme'.¹¹⁷ An article in *The Times* about the production was headlined 'Dream and nightmare meet'.¹¹⁸ Alvin Epstein's 1975/1980 production 'explor[ed] Freudian depths or Jungian reflections'.¹¹⁹ Adrian Noble's 1994 RSC production was 'a descent into the unconscious'.¹²⁰ Halio describes the waking of the

¹¹⁴ Brook, *The Shifting Point*, p. 97. In a relatively short interview on the BBC Radio 4 Today programme on 17 October 2014, Peter Brook was asked about the influences on him when he directed that 1970 production. While he referred to how he wished to portray fairies as spirits, he did not mention Kott.

¹¹⁵ David Selbourne, *The Making of 'A Midsummer 'Night's Dream'* (London: Faber and Faber, 1982), p. 77.

¹¹⁶ Cited in Maher, 'Nightmare or gentle snooze?' p. 431.

¹¹⁷ Halio, *Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 124.

¹¹⁸ Cited by Halio, *Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 123.

¹¹⁹ Maher, 'Nightmare or gentle snooze?' p. 436.

¹²⁰ Halio, *Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 135.

four lovers in Noble's production, later made into a film, as a point where 'their nightmare is over'.¹²¹ At various times in different parts of the world, as Maher and Halio show, there have been what some might call 'Brookian' interpretations, but there have also been many 'non-Brookian' interpretations as well.¹²² Such diverse interpretations suggest only that the play can generate many meanings.

Goldstein's interpretations of the *Dream* reflect then the changing culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s, when he wrote. His article echoes certain strands of literary criticism, and provides the type of interpretation of the darker elements in the play that some theatrical and film productions have also presented. Yet he is alone in psychoanalytic criticism in adopting such a standpoint on the play, and largely unacknowledged despite making an important contribution. To find anything similar, we have to look to two psychoanalytic-literary critics, and a number of literary critics.

Darker interpretations in psychoanalytic-literary criticism

Only two psychoanalytic-literary critics venture on a dark interpretation of the *Dream*, the most thorough-going example being Mordecai Marcus (1981). Before him there had only been the slightest hint in psychoanalytic-literary criticism; in Mervyn Faber's paper on Hermia's dream there was a shadow perhaps rather than darkness. Faber concludes with a brief discussion about what he takes to have been Shakespeare's view when he wrote the play of human nature and the demands of society: 'Shakespeare had come "to really appreciate ... the unconscious or "inexplicable" side of human behavior"'.¹²³ Shakespeare had, Faber suggests, detected the problem long before Freud, whose late

¹²¹ Halio, *Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 147.

¹²² Maher, 'Nightmare or gentle snooze?' pp. 429-50.

¹²³ Faber, *Hermia's Dream*, p. 189.

work *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), shows his increasing pessimism about the nature of humankind. Faber's is another version of the contrast between the ordered court of Athens and the unrepressed and uncensored experience of the lovers (including Titania and Bottom) in the wood. Society and human instincts are in tension.

Marcus was a professor of English whose publications do not otherwise reveal an interest either in psychoanalysis or in Shakespeare. Writing in the psychoanalytic journal *American Imago*, he adopts Freud's theory of the two drives of Eros and Thanatos, and applies it to the play.¹²⁴ Acknowledgement of that particular dichotomy is unusual in American psychoanalysis, although not so in British Kleinian theory. Marcus was influenced in adopting this theory by classical scholar Norman O. Brown's book *Life Against Death*, a rare example of complete acceptance of Freud's theory of a death drive.¹²⁵ Brown, like Freud, believes that in the course of civilisation humankind has become deeply repressed, no longer able, as in nature or in childhood, to hold together life and death in harmony. 'Freud was right: ... mankind, unconscious of its real desires and therefore unable to obtain satisfaction, is hostile to life and ready to destroy itself ... we either come to terms with our unconscious instincts and drives – with life and with death – or else we surely die'.¹²⁶ Since sublimation requires repression of basic instincts, mankind actually becomes more anally aggressive. Victory for the reality principle is victory for the death drive.

Mordecai Marcus argues that discord and love-and-death are closely interwoven with the play's musicality. He provides a large number of instances of this theme, concentrating

¹²⁴ Marcus, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream: the dialectic of Eros-Thanatos', pp. 269-78.

¹²⁵ Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death* (London: Routledge, 1959).

¹²⁶ Brown, *Life Against Death*, p. xviii.

more upon the death side of the equation than love: the earlier warring relationship of Theseus and Hippolyta; and the wait for their marriage as the denial of sexual fulfillment; the votaress dying in childbirth; and the quarrel over the Indian boy as a substitute for 'that normal sexual tension which can exist only under the aegis of an inevitable death'.¹²⁷

Although Goldstein's interpretation suggests that it is the scenes in the wood that are most like a nightmare, in contrast Marcus thinks that when the young lovers are in the wood 'they *only appear* to run the risks of additional betrayal, of desertion, animal predation, and death by the sword'.¹²⁸ He seems to diminish the reality of their anguish, which Goldstein has so fully identified. Only if the experience in the wood is interpreted as a dream could the reality of their situation be quite so strongly denied. There is no sense of the real tension between life and death forces that there is in Freud. His description of Helena and Hermia as 'cavorting through the forest' minimises the young women's distress.¹²⁹ A reading of the play that fully adopted both Freud and Brown's re-working of Freud would not, I suggest, criticise Kott's view of the play in the way Marcus does, 'because it forces more violence than imagery and interrelations among the characters justify'.¹³⁰ Any reading of the play that adopts Freud's theory of the death drive must fully grapple with its hate and aggression and its sadistic sexuality.

Thanatos also appears in the article by Thomas Frosch (2007), whose argument is that elements in the play indicate a symbolic regression to infancy and childhood, a time when

¹²⁷ Marcus, 'The dialectic of Eros-Thanatos', p. 273-4.

¹²⁸ Marcus, 'The dialectic of Eros-Thanatos', p. 276 (my emphasis).

¹²⁹ Marcus, 'The dialectic of Eros-Thanatos', p. 277.

¹³⁰ Marcus, 'The dialectic of Eros-Thanatos', p. 270.

psychoanalytic theory believes raw emotions and responses are not as repressed as they are later in life. But Thanatos is merely mentioned and given less emphasis than in Marcus. It occurs in the context of a reference to Hippolytus, the child born to Theseus and Hippolyta, an allusion in the final blessing that Frosch (like critics Douglas Freake and James Calderwood) believes an Elizabethan audience would have recognised.¹³¹ Frosch cites literary critic Louis Montrose as an example of a number critics who ‘prefer a more ironic and subversive understanding of the child to come’.¹³² The reference to Thanatos demonstrates Frosch’s ambivalence about a sombre view of the play, since despite the allusion to Hippolytus (‘in a certain sense the missing child of the play’) ‘we still commit ourselves to the future, to potentiality, to comic or erotic vision in a world of Thanatos’.¹³³ He misses the point of the concept of Thanatos in Freud. The comic and the erotic are attempts to deny the reality of aggression, repression and death. Frosch’s conclusion is that ‘overriding the ironic and dark notes that recent critics have stressed in the play, that comic vision [with which the play ends] recreates for us a new beginning, including the new beginning of love, in the promise for a wished-for child’.¹³⁴

Both these psychoanalytic-literary critics, Marcus and Frosch, ultimately duck the issue which Freud and Brown amongst others have so clearly addressed, which is how we come to terms not just with death, but with the various damaging consequences of relationships. Freud, and Kott too, had witnessed immense suffering, through the course of a world war;

¹³¹ The literary critic Douglas Freake is clear that ‘the audience would have known that the product of their union would eventually die because of his father’s curse’ (‘A comic version of the Theseus myth’, p. 263). The psychoanalytic-literary critic, James Calderwood, plausibly suggests that Elizabethans would have known that Egeus in Greek mythology was Theseus’s father, who drowns himself when he believes Theseus is dead (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, p. 68).

¹³² Frosch, ‘The missing child’, p. 503. Montrose writes: ‘Oberon’s blessing of the marriage bed of Theseus and Hippolyta evokes precisely that which it seeks to suppress: the cycle of sexual and familial desire, fear, violence and betrayal that will begin again at the very engendering of Hippolytus’ (*The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theater* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), p. 149).

¹³³ Frosch, ‘The missing child’, pp. 503-4.

¹³⁴ Frosch, ‘The missing child’, p. 485.

and the effect of these cataclysmic periods must have affected their outlook – the recognition of a darker world, the question of the power of aggression for Freud, and of oppression for Kott. They are complementary. It is strange, when Freud and psychoanalysis had recognised what literature had already well documented, that is, the maelstrom of unconscious fears and desires, that psychoanalytic and psychoanalytically-informed criticism of the play generally confines itself to the comic, without fully exploring the tragic in the *Dream*.

Darker interpretations in literary criticism

A type of nightmare interpretation of the play had featured very occasionally in literary criticism some years before Jan Kott. G. Wilson Knight, in his 1932 essay on the play, uses the term ‘nightmare’ of the play and describes it as having a ‘*Macbeth*-like quality’. He cites a large number of aspects of the play to justify his comment: the quarrel between Oberon and Titania giving rise to a ‘tempest at the heart of the play’, to disorder in nature; and scenes where there is an ‘atmosphere of gloom and dread’.¹³⁵ Wilson Knight’s recognition of a contrasting jarring note in the play was in advance of its time.

Jan Kott’s interpretation of the *Dream* with its concentration on its erotic and bestial imagery is the starkest view in European literary criticism.¹³⁶ Whereas he has had considerable impact upon literary criticism, I have already observed that Goldstein is the only psychoanalytic critic who refers to Kott, although three psychoanalytic-literary critics discussed in these chapters refer briefly to him: Norman Holland is dismissive, caricaturing Kott’s picture of the lovers in the wood as a ‘drunken switch party’;¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Tredell, *Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, pp. 46-58.

¹³⁶ Kott, ‘Titania and the ass’s head’, pp. 214-35.

¹³⁷ N. N. Holland, ‘Hermia’s dream’, p. 385.

Frosch employs Kott's description of Bottom as a holy fool;¹³⁸ and Mordecai Marcus uses Kott to support his view that the theme of the *Dream* is Eros and Thanatos. He notes that Kott fails to develop the theme.¹³⁹ There is in fact only one place where Kott links Thanatos with the more frequent references to Eros.¹⁴⁰ There is little evidence of real dialogue between Kott's ideas and psychoanalytic interpretations.

For his part Kott refers only once to Freud in his chapter on the *Dream*, when he lists the snakes, newts, spiders, beetles, worms and snails in the fairies' lullaby, all 'slimy, hairy, sticky creatures, unpleasant to touch and often arousing violent aversion ... described by psychoanalytic textbooks as a sexual neurosis'; such creatures 'form a favourite bestiary of Freud's theory of dreams'.¹⁴¹ Kott describes the scene in Titania's bower as one that 'rouse(s) rapture and disgust, terror and abhorrence'.¹⁴²

Kott's impact is more obvious, as one would expect, in literary criticism. Allan Lewis in 1969 includes the phrase 'fairy fantasy or erotic nightmare' in the title of his paper.¹⁴³ Similarly in the United States in 1969 Michael Taylor's theme is 'the darker purpose' of the play.¹⁴⁴ He draws out various comments by C. L. Barber to support his view:

Lysander and Hermia look briefly 'at the tragic potentialities of passion'; Barber's

¹³⁸ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 488.

¹³⁹ Marcus, 'The dialectic of Eros-Thanatos', p. 269.

¹⁴⁰ In fact Freud never used the term 'Thanatos'. The juxtaposition was always between Eros and the 'death-instinct', or the 'destructive instinct'. This misuse of the word is seen later in other critics who refer to Freud.

¹⁴¹ Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, p. 226.

¹⁴² Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, p. 228. Although Goldstein also uses the term terror, he has very little to say about the relationship between Bottom and Titania.

¹⁴³ Allan Lewis, 'A *Midsummer Night's Dream* – fairy fantasy or erotic nightmare', pp. 251-8.

¹⁴⁴ Michael Taylor, 'The darker purpose of A *Midsummer Night's Dream*', pp. 259-73. A third paper by Sidney Homan in that year starts with a reference to Kott, but comes down on the side of a more benign interpretation ('The single world of A *Midsummer Night's Dream*', *The Bucknell Review*, 1 (1969), pp. 72-84).

comment on Lysander's speech about love (1.1.141-9) that it is a 'tragic vision';¹⁴⁵ and 'scepticism [is] in solution throughout the play'.¹⁴⁶ But where Barber paints the lovers' quarrels as 'farce' Taylor refers to the language used by all four lovers as vicious, savage and grotesque.¹⁴⁷

Taylor's focus is more on the relationship between the four lovers (for example, on Lysander's intensely spiteful attitude of disgust towards Hermia) than on the other characters. Nevertheless Theseus and Hippolyta, and Oberon and Titania, show similar traits in their relationships. As Taylor concludes, the lovers' joy in the final act may be a fact, and the way the joy has been brought about is real. Therefore the final words from Oberon and Puck are, Taylor thinks, 'a trifle glib' and 'mechanical'.¹⁴⁸ In Hugh Richmond's 1971 book, he describes the sexuality in the play as sado-masochistic.¹⁴⁹ Alexander Leggatt, writing in 1973, may have been influenced by Brook's production, when he writes that 'the comic world of the play is very close to a darker world of passion, terror and chaos, yet the border between them, though thin, is never broken'.¹⁵⁰

What is evident is that in the space of a few years there is a tranche of papers that to varying degrees take a similar line to Goldstein's. While it is tempting to consider these different darker interpretations, alongside Goldstein's, as influenced by Kott, in the absence of any evidence to suggest Kott's (or indeed Freud's) influence it appears that a particular group of critics have come by different routes to a similar view of the play – a

¹⁴⁵ Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 126.

¹⁴⁶ Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 142.

¹⁴⁷ Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 129.

¹⁴⁸ Taylor, 'The darker purpose', p. 272.

¹⁴⁹ Hugh, Richmond, *Shakespeare's Sexual Comedy: A Mirror for Lovers*.

¹⁵⁰ Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love*, p. 111. On the same page Leggatt writes 'The play is aware of both extreme attitudes to sex, but steers a civilized middle course as is appropriate to comedy'. See Leggatt's note on p. 112 for his reference to Brook's production.

type of convergent evolution. The literary critics at that time did not know of the parallel contribution that Goldstein's psychoanalytic interpretation was making. Had they done so it would have enhanced their focus on the relationship between the comic and the tragic.

Conclusion

Psychoanalysts and psychotherapists always look below the surface presentations of their patients. There is always more than meets the eye, even in patients who describe their lives as running smoothly and who apparently only have one small thing that troubles them. Therapists probably feel as much concern for those who deny their difficulties are of any concern as they do for those who are burdened with anxieties. This does not mean that therapists seek to disabuse the nonchalant: defences are defences and they are respected. Therapists wait for the moment when the mask slips, and they can gently encourage the unspoken to find expression.

So too might we approach this comedy of Shakespeare's. I doubt whether many producers would want to turn it into a tragedy, to send the audience back to their beds to dream nightmares after what they have witnessed on stage. But that does not mean when discussing the play outside the theatre that scenes and speeches should be ignored in which the characters reveal an aspect of themselves that contrasts with their protestations of love. Pure comedy easily turns into something shallow and bland. Light and shade, laughter and sorrow, bliss and pain, freedom and fear, love and hate are closer to the real world, even when the play is all about a dream.

I find the various discussions that highlight the nightmare qualities within the dream

intellectually and emotionally realistic. Although unaware of Goldstein's psychoanalytic contribution to discussion of the play, literary criticism and productions of the play around the same time as he wrote implicitly support Goldstein's view of the nightmare qualities of the *Dream*. Whether in literary criticism, or in psychoanalytic criticism as in Goldstein's persuasive article, identification of the darker side of the play seems right: it is not a dark play, but it has darker elements; it is not a nightmare, but it has nightmarish moments; it is not a tragedy, but it points to the tragic in ordinary lives. It ends somewhat joyously, but with an edge in the way Oberon and Puck address the audience (5.1.362-381, 400-406). Maher sums it up well when she writes, 'the text of the play can support Romantic Comedy, Dark Comedy, and perhaps Black Comedy, but it does not support emptying the play of its basis in humor'.¹⁵¹ The *Dream* remains a dream from which the audience gently awakes with smiles, not a nightmare they are pleased to wake up from and shake off. But by the same token the tragic should not be ignored.

Comedy needs to be understood as one way of dealing with issues that can in other circumstances be difficult and distressing. Comedy of course is comedy, as much as Freud's cigar was a cigar.¹⁵² There is always a risk, especially amongst psychoanalysts, of over-interpretation, although I do not think that any of the different critics discussed in this chapter go that far. Representing psychoanalytic criticism, Goldstein in particular is not like Gui. For that reason while Gui remains of interest as a psychoanalytic curiosity, Goldstein deserves more notice than he has as yet received.

What is obvious in life and in this play is that 'the course of true love never ran smooth'.

¹⁵¹ Maher, 'Nightmare or gentle snooze?', p. 446.

¹⁵² 'As Freud said, sometimes a cigar is a cigar. Everything is not always everything else, and we may too easily consider language as just a substitute for another object, be it the breast or the presumably pure idea that lies beneath the words' (D.V. Forrest, 'Language as object – and subject', *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalytic Dynamic Psychiatry*, 11 (1983), p. 524.)

Jan Kott may describe the theme as Eros and Thanatos, but as the play is more obviously a comedy than a tragedy, so it more obviously is about love than about death. How psychoanalytic criticism has handled the theme of love in the play is the focus of the final chapter.

Four: Beyond the Oedipus complex

As one of Shakespeare's comedies of love, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* seems to have created a problem for psychoanalytic critics of the play. I argue in this chapter that psychoanalytic criticism, in its single-minded attention to the Oedipus complex when writing about the love themes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, has failed to develop interpretations of the play from other writing on love relations both in Freud and in later psychoanalytic literature. I demonstrate how limited an exclusively oedipal reading of the *Dream* is, and I elaborate how other Freudian and post-Freudian elements of psychoanalytic theory provide rich interpretative possibilities.

The Oedipus complex is a major strand of psychoanalytic dogma, yet it says more about rivalry than love. I initially question whether oedipal issues, at least as they are discussed in relation to the play, actually constitute the best interpretations of the various expressions of love in the play's different characters. In discussing Freud's 'Contributions to the Psychology of love' I show that it is possible to enrich a psychological profile of the loving relationships of the two young male lovers, without having to assume a pre-existing oedipal issue.¹ I also demonstrate from Freud's letters to his fiancée how his attitudes towards a woman as a younger man suggest a view of male-female relationships that may be closer to attitudes in Elizabethan England than contemporary views on gender relations; and that this makes it possible that his papers on love could provide useful insights into the play's characters and into its patriarchy.²

¹ All three parts of Freud's series of papers on love are in the *Standard Edition*, Volume XI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and the Hogarth Press, 1957): 'A Special Type of Choice of Object made by Men', 1910, pp. 163-176; 'On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love', 1912, pp. 177-190; and 'The Taboo of Virginity', 1918, pp. 191-208.

² E. L. Freud ed., *Letters of Sigmund Freud, 1873-1939*.

Although I question some of the ways in which oedipal interpretations of the play contribute to the theme of loving relationships, I give due weight to those who have applied the Oedipus complex to their ideas on the play. I refer again to two of the psychoanalytic critics discussed in earlier chapters: Weston Gui (1952) and Melvin Goldstein (1973). Other psychoanalytic critics are examined for their particular contributions: Gerald Jacobson (1962), Robert Ravich (1964), Vicky Hartman (1983), and Julius Heuscher (1989).³ I also discuss psychoanalytic-literary critics who refer to oedipal issues: Shirley Nelson Garner (1981), James Calderwood (1992), Allen Dunn (1998) and Thomas Frosch (2007).⁴ I conclude this first section by discussing the appeal of the play to audiences as one that represents psychological truths about love and regression, including references to Adrian Noble's and Max Reinhardt's films of the *Dream* as echoing such oedipal interpretations.⁵

Freud's theory of narcissism is an important contribution to a psychoanalytic understanding of loving relations developmentally before and beyond the Oedipus complex; but psychoanalytic critics of the play have largely ignored it. In addition to Freud's paper on narcissism, but closely linked to it, I refer to more recent developments in psychoanalysis in the work of Heinz Kohut (1971) and Otto Kernberg (1995), and in particular refer to the latter's book on love relations.⁶ There is only one psychoanalytic

³ Jacobson (1962), 'A note on Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream"'; Ravich (1964), 'A psychoanalytic study of Shakespeare's early plays'; Vicky Hartman, 'A *Midsummer Night's Dream*: a gentle concord to the oedipal problem', *American Imago*, 40 (1983), pp. 355-69; Julius Heuscher (1989), 'Theseus and Hippolyta on the Couch'.

⁴ Shirley Nelson Garner, 'A *Midsummer Night's Dream*: "Jack shall have Jill; Nought shall go ill"', *Women's Studies*, 9.1 (1981), pp. 47-63; Calderwood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Allen Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream'; Frosch, 'The missing child'.

⁵ Adrian Noble, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [DVD]; Max Reinhardt, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [Korean DVD].

⁶ O. F. Kernberg, *Love Relations: Normality and Pathology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self* (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1971).

critic, Melvin Goldstein (1973), whose view of Demetrius closely approximates to that of a narcissistic character and I discuss that aspect of his paper.⁷ I bring together the ideas about narcissism and identity in Goldstein, the combination of which supports an interpretation of the behaviour of Lysander and Demetrius under the influence of the love-juice. I support this from the writing of Thomas MacCary (1985), a psychoanalytic-literary critic, who stresses narcissism as a feature of the male lovers in Shakespearean comedies.⁸ I reflect on other examples of narcissistic behaviour in characters in the play.

Idealisation is a feature of the male lover in the comedies, and this is the third aspect of love that I consider. The second of two further papers by Freud, on transference-love, has the potentiality for furthering interpretations of the effect of the love-juice.⁹ There is a brief reference to this paper in the most recent of the psychoanalytic papers in this thesis, by Ellen Pinsky (2014).¹⁰ Her discussion of transference love throws considerable light upon the experience of those whose eyes are anointed with the love-juice; and drawing upon Freud she suggests a parallel between the stage and the consulting room. I observe in addition that the nature of the psychoanalytic process in the consulting room might be understood as like the illusion of theatre, and the tenuous nature of reality in the *Dream*. Pinsky's reference to the *Dream* may be incidental to the main argument of her paper, as are further brief references to the play in a succession of psychoanalytic critics and the writing of other psychoanalysts. Nevertheless these allusions to the play contribute to a patchwork of ideas on the nature of the love-juice, which is such an important feature of the events in the wood. Here there are some interesting

⁷ Goldstein, 'Identity crises'; Sigmund Freud, 'On Narcissism', 1914, *Standard Edition*, Volume XIV (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and the Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 109-140.

⁸ MacCary, *Friends and Lovers*.

⁹ Sigmund Freud, 'Observations on transference-love', 1915, *Standard Edition*, Volume XII (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1958), pp.157-171.

¹⁰ Ellen Pinsky, 'The potion: reflections on Freud's "Observations on transference-love"', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytical Association*, 62.3 (2014), pp. 455-74.

contributions, albeit using the play as an illustration of an idea rather than using an idea as a critical tool used upon the play. I refer to three British psychoanalytic psychotherapists: Warren Colman (1994), J. F. Turner (2002) and James Fisher (2004), all making more recent contributions on the subject.¹¹ I also make reference to American psychoanalytic critics, such as E. Rosenfeld (1951), Alan Rothenberg (1977) Ethel Spector Person (1989), R. D. Chessick (1999) and the literary critic Thomas Frosch (2007), all of whom contribute to my own view of the blindness of love at first sight as a vital aspect of the male lovers' (and Titania's) experiences in the wood.¹²

I conclude that part of the chapter with reference to the myth of Cupid and Psyche, and argue that more consideration needs to be given to it in psychoanalytic interpretations of the play. I welcome the writing of Carol Gilligan on this myth and what it means for a more contemporary understanding of loving relations. It is also a myth that probably would have been more than familiar to Shakespeare and that has direct relevance for the *Dream*, and therefore a more appropriate myth to draw upon in thinking about the play than the Oedipus story.¹³ That latter myth has dominated psychoanalysis. I note that the literary critic James McPeck had earlier argued convincingly that allusions to the myth appear in the play.¹⁴ However, I see further parallels between aspects of the myth and falling in love at first sight, which again I suggest psychoanalytic criticism has neglected

¹¹ Warren Colman, 'Love, desire and infatuation: encountering the erotic spirit', *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 39 (1994), pp. 497-514; J. F. Turner, 'A brief history of illusion', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 83 (2002), pp. 1063-82; James V. Fisher, "'Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind": the death and rebirth of imagination', *Journal of the British Association of Psychotherapists*, 42.2 (2004), pp. 101-15.

¹² E. Rosenfeld, 'The Pan-headed Moses – a parallel', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 32, (1951), pp. 83-93; A. B. Rothenberg, 'Infantile fantasies in Shakespearian metaphor, III: photophobia, love of darkness, and "black" complexions', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 64 (1977), pp. 173-202; Palombo, 'The genius of the dream'; Ethel Spector Person, *Love and Fateful Encounters: the Power of Romantic Passion* (London: Bloomsbury, 1989); R. D. Chessick, 'Passionate love', *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry*, 27 (1999), pp. 515-521.

¹³ Carol Gilligan, *The Birth of Pleasure: A New Map of Love* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).

¹⁴ James McPeck, 'The Psyche myth and A Midsummer Night's Dream', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 23.1 (1972), pp. 69-79.

in its obsession with the Oedipus complex. I conclude the chapter by acknowledging that psychoanalysis has a difficult task trying to describe different aspects of love, and that it is often the poets who inform psychoanalysis as much as psychoanalysis informs poetry.

Freud's 'Contributions to a Psychology of Love'

Common opinion on Freud suggests that his only interest is in sex, and that sexuality is an inbuilt drive that has little to do with love; alternatively, that love is all about sex.

This is, of course, a caricature. However Freud's writing on love is dispersed among his works, making a single definition or description of love difficult, although the following sentences demonstrate how broad a concept it was for him:

The nucleus of what we mean by love naturally consists (and this is what is commonly called love, and what the poets sing of) in sexual love with sexual union as its aim. But we do not separate from this – what in any case has a share in the name 'love' – on the one hand, self-love, and on the other, love for parents and children, friendship and love for humanity in general, and also devotion to concrete objects and to abstract ideas.¹⁵

Freud concentrates in writing about the subject on what he calls 'disturbing associations', by which he means neurotic forms of love.¹⁶ He acknowledges that creative writers have written about love, but says that they describe it in such a way as to enhance pleasure. This is a rather blinkered view of fictional accounts of loving relationships, whether in Shakespeare or elsewhere.

¹⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego', 1921, *Standard Edition*, Volume XVIII (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 90.

¹⁶ Freud, 'A Special Type of Choice of Object made by Men', p. 165.

Freud knew what it was to be in love, and his letters to his fiancée, Martha Bernays, reveal both his feelings about her and his attitudes to women. This should be taken fully into account given that much psychoanalytic criticism refers back to Freud's theories in its interpretations of the *Dream*.¹⁷ Freud was a child of his age, as Shakespeare was of his, and as literary and psychoanalytic critics at different periods are of theirs. Freud's views in those letters are clear on masculinity and femininity, and on the relationship between a husband and his wife, and must have contributed to his later thinking.

Psychoanalytic interpretations of love and desire in the *Dream*, particularly in Freud, but often just as much in his followers, typify their late 19th century context. In these respects Freud's society was closer to Shakespeare's than our more liberal contemporary society is, and therefore we may expect some similarity in their attitudes to love and intimate relationships.¹⁸

The letters demonstrate how deeply he was in love and how much he depended upon Martha's love: 'when I think what I would be like now if I hadn't found you – lacking ambition, lacking the joy in the lighter pleasures of the world ... I would just have strayed miserably and gone into a decline'.¹⁹ But they also show that it was up to a suitor to draw a young woman's affection away from her parents towards himself; that courtship should be slow, that a woman should not immediately respond to the suitor, and that the man should also show self-restraint; that women have a different place in society, that their beauty, charm and goodness are their strengths and not, as for a man, their education; that while a man needed to pursue his career, women needed to be

¹⁷ E. L. Freud, *Letters*. The summary that follows also draws upon an article by Ada Farber, 'Freud's love letters: intimations of psychoanalytic theory', *Psychoanalytic Review* (1978) pp. 166-189.

¹⁸ Stephen Greenblatt argues that psychoanalysis, being at the end of the Renaissance, cannot interpret early modern literature ('Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture', in *Learning to Curse*, New York: Routledge, 1990); this underlines how far Freud's interpretations of Shakespeare could have arisen from the same mindset. On the other hand Freud was also able to be critical of his own culture.

¹⁹ E. L. Freud, *Letters*, p. 57

protected and should be dependent on her husband, as well as being devoted to and nurturing her husband and children; and that any equality there was in the relationship was because Freud would let Martha ‘rule the house as much as you wish, and you will reward me with your sweet love and by rising above all those weaknesses for which women are so often despised.’²⁰ In one of his letters Freud tells her that he wants them to be equals, in that they can be open with each other, and to ‘adjust to each other as far as is possible for two human beings’.²¹ But in so instructing her he comes across as patronising.

What is important is to take into account constantly that the latter part of the twentieth-century may culturally be further from Freud than Freud is from Shakespeare. This is inevitably reflected in that much psychoanalytic criticism is still catching up with its contemporary context. Freud’s attitude to gender relations has similarities to those in the early modern period, although the female roles in many of Shakespeare’s plays are often of a different kind, challenging the established order. Hermia and Helena each do this in their own ways, determined to pursue their love, even if by the end of the play the established order appears to have been endorsed. It is questionable whether their assertiveness and bid for self-determination lasts.

There is, as might be expected, a contrast between Freud’s ‘scientific’ approach to love and those early letters. In his ‘Contributions’ he is interested why a man should fall in love with women who are already engaged or married; or why a man seeks relationships with women of bad repute whose fidelity is in doubt; or why a man has an urge to rescue them; or has serial love affairs. While there is ‘to a certain degree’ a compulsive quality

²⁰ E. L. Freud, *Letters*, p. 85.

²¹ E. L. Freud, *Letters*, pp. 56-7.

to *all* falling in love it is a feature of the types of love he describes in these papers that they have an even greater compulsive quality.²²

There is much in these ‘Contributions’ that need not concern the literary critic, particularly around the explanation Freud puts forward for these compulsions and for male impotence, which he believes stem from the failure in a man ‘to come to terms with the idea of incest with his mother or sister’.²³ Yet there are other aspects that appear to describe the behaviour of Lysander and Demetrius. For example, there is clearly a compulsive nature to the way each man pursues Helena after the application of the love-juice. When Freud writes that men tend to split ‘the two currents of affection and sensuality’, this seems to apply to their protestations of love for Helena; there is no sense of any real affection for her. The young men force themselves upon her, making her into a debased sexual object, however much they protest their soaring love for her.²⁴ Freud writes of men who ‘where they love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love’, and the young men’s behaviour towards Helena can be said to be all desire and very little genuine love.²⁵ The scenes in the wood are glaring examples of ‘the universal tendency to debasement in the sphere of love’.²⁶

The 1910 paper ‘A Special Type of Object Choice’ includes the first use of the term ‘Oedipus complex’.²⁷ Freud discusses how a boy at puberty realises that his parents have intercourse, and that this re-activates ‘certain mental impulses’ (presumed to be earlier in development and now unconscious), leading him to desire his mother and hate his father.

²² Freud, ‘A Special Type of Choice of Object made by Men’, p. 168.

²³ Freud, ‘On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love’, p. 186.

²⁴ Freud, ‘On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love’, p. 185.

²⁵ Freud, ‘On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love’, p. 183.

²⁶ The title of the paper in which these ideas appear.

²⁷ Freud, ‘A Special Type of Object’, p. 171. Freud had referred to the Oedipus myth in his 1897 letter to Fliess, but not to a complex as such.

This theory and the technical term ‘Oedipus complex’ have become extended over time, particularly after Freud, so that it has come to be applied to many other triangular configurations than those which Freud highlights, and without necessarily any implication of falling in love with mother and wishing to dispose of the father. It is as if, and this is clear from the ‘Contributions’ papers, Freud thinks that the failure to resolve the Oedipus complex ‘infects’ all types of triangular relationship.

Freud, perhaps, can be excused for not saying too much about the Oedipus complex in the *Dream*, since his one comment on a triangular situation in the play was made long before he wrote about Oedipus, and even longer before he coined the term Oedipus complex. In his correspondence with Fliess in 1892 he comments: ‘Titania, who will not love her rightful husband Oberon, is obliged instead to bestow her love on Bottom, the phantasy ass’.²⁸ There is no development of this observation, but it is interesting that it is in the context of the *Dream* that he first touches on an idea that he was later to develop into one of the cornerstones of psychoanalysis, some years before he associated Hamlet and Oedipus.²⁹

Psychoanalytic criticism of the play since Freud has identified many different oedipal interpretations, although there is strictly only one that involves a child, a father figure and a mother figure, which is the Indian boy, Oberon and Titania. Even here it is the parents who fight over the child, rather than the original complex would suggest, the child who in fantasy wishes to fight the father over possession of the mother.

²⁸ Freud, Draft N, p. 256.

²⁹ In an article in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Freud listed the Oedipus complex amongst four foundations of psychoanalytic theory, which a psychoanalyst had to accept (‘Two encyclopaedia articles’, 1923, *Standard Edition*, Volume XVIII (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955), p. 247).

I suggest there has been so much concentration on the Oedipus complex in the play, that two different manifestations of love in the play have been neglected: narcissism and idealisation. Both are recognised by Freud as further examples of kinds of loving. These neglected aspects of a psychology of love apply to many of the male characters of the play, and I discuss these more fully below. First, however, it is psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary interpretations of oedipal issues that merit attention.

The Oedipus complex – psychoanalytic critics

The most obvious and frequent type of interpretation made generally by psychoanalysts both in their practice and in applied criticism of art and literature is to identify various oedipal patterns or triangular situations. Ethel Spector Person observes: ‘Our culture is so saturated with Freud that when anyone alludes to triangles, our thoughts immediately go to the most basic of all triangles, the Oedipus complex’.³⁰ The American literary critic Stanley Hyman, writing in the middle of the twentieth century, believed that critics tended to have a master metaphor which shapes and informs, but can also limit their work. He is right that in the case of Freudian literary criticism the master metaphor is the Oedipus complex, and that this leads to an obvious limitation

that only one study can be written, since every additional one would turn out to say the same thing. Ernest Jones could do a beautiful job finding the underlying Oedipus complex in Hamlet, but had he gone on to analyze Lear or *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or the Sonnets he would have found to his surprise that they reflected Shakespeare's Oedipus complex too, and, in fact, granting his theories, he would have made the same discovery about any other work of art.³¹

³⁰ Person, *Love and Fateful Encounters*, p. 218.

³¹ S. E. Hyman, *The Armed Vision* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1947), pp. 166-7.

The *Dream* is full of these love triangles: Theseus-Hippolyta-Titania, Oberon-Hippolyta-Titania, Egeus-Hermia-Lysander, Lysander-Hermia-Demetrius, Helena-Demetrius-Hermia, Lysander-Helena-Demetrius, and Pyramus-Thisbe-their parents. Two of these involve parental injunctions preventing children choosing their own partners. The other situations are as much about rivalry or ownership as about love. If identification of oedipal situations is simply synonymous with rivalries, psychoanalytic criticism is not saying very much. Freud's treatment of 'disturbing associations' in love always involved identifying reasons for them, and he found them in the Oedipus complex. Criticism of the *Dream* does not permit such an explanation, since there is no backstory (save the absence of mothers) that enables the psychoanalytic critic to argue that, for example, Lysander is behaving in a particular way because of the relationship he had as a child with his parents. Contrast reading Jones on Hamlet, where an oedipal interpretation is not immediately obvious, but comes (rightly or wrongly) as an answer to his question why Hamlet delays in exacting revenge on his uncle.

Of greatest interest in psychoanalytic and literary criticism are the observations that quarry beneath simple triangular situations. Gui, for example, asks what Bottom's dream might reveal. It is ironic that the only true Oedipus complex in psychoanalytic criticism of the play is that put forward by Gui, whose otherwise distorted interpretation of the play interprets Bottom's dream as the child in a triangular situation with Oberon and Titania, or even in waking life in a fantasy involving Theseus and Hippolyta. Bottom's dream is full of oedipal situations: the parent-child-parent conflict is seen not only in Bottom sleeping with Titania (even if it is with Oberon's implicit consent); there is the projection of Bottom's desire in his dream on to the Oberon-Indian boy-Titania triangle. Further, the dialogue between Oberon and Titania in Act 2:1 states that each has been in

a relationship with either Hippolyta (TITANIA, 2.1.70-1) or with Theseus (OBERON, 2.1.76), so that if Oberon and Titania are symbolic figures in Bottom's dream they may represent his struggle with oedipal anxiety about the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta. More true to the original Oedipus complex than most interpretations (although I think not true to the play) Theseus is the symbolic father who needs to be appeased for Bottom's sexual and oral wishes towards his symbolic mother; and Theseus has his own oedipal issues, which Bottom's performance as Pyramus to some extent ameliorates.³² Much of this is far-fetched as an interpretation, and there is not the murderous intent that is found in the application of the Oedipus complex to Hamlet, but the sexual is clearly present. Gui even extends the triangular situation to an oral level, so that food, and suckling becomes an important theme in his interpretation, leading to his bold assumption that Bottom's dream represents Shakespeare's own memories of wishing to replace his brother at his mother's breast. Here there is an extension of the oedipal situation to early infancy, an interpretation that, if it were not so speculative, is supported by Melanie Klein's theory that the Oedipus complex is not just a feature of later infancy or puberty, but of the baby at the breast.³³

I have already made it clear that I think Gui's paper, while ingenious, stretches the text too far. It reads as if he wanted to accommodate as much as he possibly could of this cornerstone theory in his interpretation of the text. Gui's interpretation centres on a boy's oedipal development, but another aspect of the Oedipus complex that Freud never satisfactorily resolved is the equivalent stage in the psychological development of women. A West Coast psychiatrist Gerald Jacobson (1962), inspired by Gui's essay,

³² Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 288.

³³ M. Klein, 'Early stages of the Oedipus conflict', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 9 (1928), pp. 167-80. However, Klein's ideas were not accepted in the United States at the time Gui wrote, so it is doubtful that she influenced him. There is a singular absence of reference to her theories in most psychoanalytic criticism of the play, save in Britain where her work is well known.

praises Gui's interpretation, recapitulating Gui's central argument of Bottom as 'the oedipal boy', before taking what he calls 'a further step':

Just as Bottom's dream represents the unsuccessful working through of the psychic conflicts of the boy, so can we see in the Oberon-Titania, but particularly in the Hermia-Lysander-Helena-Demetrius plots, the struggles that culminate in the successful resolution of the analogous conflicts in the girl.³⁴

In classical Freudian psychoanalytic theory at the time Jacobson wrote, a girl's Oedipus complex involved anxiety at not having a penis, and the wish to replace the missing penis with a baby from her father. Jacobson therefore applies the theory to the play, putting forward a psychoanalytic perspective that would have been regarded at the time as an orthodox interpretation.³⁵

Since the play was written to be viewed by women as well as men, Jacobson suggests, the play would please them, since it 'unravel[s] the vicissitudes of their development with a successful outcome'.³⁶ He considers the Indian boy, this time not from Bottom's perspective, as Gui does, but from Titania's. Using Puck's description of Titania and the boy (2.1.21-7), Jacobson suggests that 'the stolen changeling child may also represent the little girl's fantasy of stealing mother's baby, and killing mother, as in this case the

³⁴ Jacobson, 'A note', p. 22.

³⁵ There had already been challenges to such a theory from some women analysts who later parted from the psychoanalytic institutes, but their arguments were largely ignored in early orthodox psychoanalysis. 'The hypothesis of a primary phallic sexuality carries with it momentous consequences for our whole conception of feminine sexuality. If we assume that there is a specifically feminine, primary, vaginal sexuality the former hypothesis, if not altogether excluded, is at least so drastically restricted that those consequences become quite problematical' (Karen Horney, 'The denial of the vagina – a contribution to the problem of the genital anxieties specific to women,' *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 14 (1933), p. 70).

³⁶ Jacobson, 'A Note', p. 22.

stolen child belonged to a woman who died in childbirth'.³⁷ In addition, he sees the Indian boy as demonstrating the 'problem of sexual identification in women'.³⁸ Will the boy be raised to become a knight of Oberon's train or will he be raised in a more feminine manner, since Titania crowns the boy with flowers? Titania is represented as the 'castrating woman who femininizes (*sic*) the male child'.³⁹ She represents the mother who finds it difficult to allow her boy child to grow away from her. The play shows how she must 'give up the male child, and her claims to possess the penis, before she can once again share Oberon's bed'.⁴⁰ The initial hypothesis, that the boy represents a penis, may be shaky, but Jacobson employs it well. However, I prefer to think of the boy not as a representation of her own potency, but as a potent representative of Titania's attachment to the Indian queen.

Jacobson devotes much of his article to Hermia. In the relationship between Hermia and her father the manifest situation is that Hermia is being compelled to marry the man whom her father has chosen for her. But beneath the manifest level, he suggests that Hermia is in love with the man her father has chosen for her; and that she reacts against both Demetrius and her father, because to marry Demetrius would be to marry a man who represents her father, making Demetrius an incestuous choice. It is Lysander who represents a non-incestuous lover. To reach such a conclusion, for which there is no evidence in the text or the plot, Jacobson has to assume that Hermia is projecting her wish to marry her father on to her father's insistence that she marry Demetrius – a truly complex scenario.

³⁷ The idea of the girl wanting father's baby as a replacement for her missing penis is found in Freud's lecture on 'Femininity' in 'New Introductory Lectures of Psychoanalysis', 1933, p. 128.

³⁸ Jacobson, 'A note', p. 23.

³⁹ Jacobson, 'A note', p. 23.

⁴⁰ Jacobson, 'A note', p. 23.

Another oedipal theme is rivalry between mother and daughter. There are no mothers on stage in the play, but this does not deter Jacobson, because he can identify a symbolic mother. While he acknowledges the sisterly relationship between the two young women, which is clear from Hermia's later reference to 'the sisters' vows' (3.2.199), Helena is a mother figure as well as a sister. Jacobson's thin textual evidence is that Hermia refers to Helena's greater height (3.2.290-7). So he interprets the quarrel between the sisters as also a quarrel between mother and daughter. Hermia's oedipal situation is resolved when Demetrius (who represents father) marries Helena (who represents mother), leaving Hermia able to marry the 'post-oedipal' partner Lysander! A neat psychoanalytic resolution, but completely unnecessary when the oedipal conflict for the lovers is solely based on the young men, rather than the young women, who have to passively endure the whims of their lovers.

I surmise that Jacobson, clearly impressed by Gui's article, saw the need to contribute an equally plausible interpretation of the complementary theory of a girl's Oedipus complex. Jacobson concludes his article by praising Shakespeare's genius at being able to represent 'the ageless unconscious' in his characters, and in every man and woman.⁴¹ This remark suggests that his intention was to show that Freudian theory had been prefigured in Shakespeare, and that attributing such insights to Shakespeare added particular value to psychoanalytic theory.

What is surprising is that Jacobson does not engage with another possibility in relation to Hermia and Helena, the homoerotic. Whereas Freud understood homosexuality as an inversion rather than a perversion, psychoanalysis after him has been much more

⁴¹ Jacobson, 'A note', pp. 25-6.

ensorious.⁴² But this had not precluded a number of psychoanalytic identifications of homosexuality in Shakespeare's plays.⁴³ It may be that in wishing to show that Shakespeare portrays a normal and successful Freudian path towards female oedipal resolution, Jacobson chose not to identify the possibility of a homoerotic elements in the relationship between Hermia and Helena, preferring for his own purposes to interpret Helena as a mother-figure.

Writing at a similar period, Robert Ravich (1964) devotes a few paragraphs to the *Dream*, indicating that the play is 'of particular interest to the psychoanalyst', since it is one in which 'Shakespeare clearly deals with the Oedipal theme and the conflicts within the family triangle'.⁴⁴ He provides two examples, Egeus's insistence on his right to choose Hermia's husband, and the conflict between Oberon and Titania over the Indian boy. It is difficult in the light of these brief references to see how Ravich can consider that in the *Dream* 'a more frankly Oedipal situation is portrayed than in Hamlet', unless he assumes that in Hamlet the oedipal issue is beneath the surface, whereas in this play it is obvious.⁴⁵ His is a good example of the dilution of the raw Oedipus complex to any triangular situation.

I detect a gradual move away from the ever dominant, almost obligatory interpretation of the Oedipus complex in the play. I note that by the 1970s Goldstein (1973) moves beyond the oedipal struggles between the young lovers (which he recognises) to their

⁴² Freud talked of 'the mystery of homosexuality' ('The psychogenesis of a case of female homosexuality', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1920), p. 147); but most psychoanalytic approaches until the 1990s, tended 'to view homosexuality as psychopathological – a deviation from healthy and fully mature living' (S.A. Mitchell, 'Psychodynamics, homosexuality, and the question of pathology', *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 3 (2002), p. 3).

⁴³ For example, Leontes and Polixenes in J. I. M. Stewart's explanation for Leontes's sudden jealousy (*Character and Motive in Shakespeare*, p. 35).

⁴⁴ Ravich, 'A psychoanalytic study of Shakespeare's early plays', p. 405.

⁴⁵ Ravich, 'A psychoanalytic study of Shakespeare's early plays', p. 405.

adolescent identity crises. For Goldstein, the testing of their manhood is a preferred interpretation over any oedipal conflict with Hermia's father.⁴⁶ His analysis of Helena similarly concentrates not on oedipal conflict but on what he believes to be her gender identity and her homosexual love for Hermia. The crisis which Theseus and Hippolyta are facing is a different one, more concerned with gender identity than love. The gender issues are related not to the outcome of oedipal identification, as in Freud, but rather to power relations. Which gender will dominate? It is a refreshing break from classical Freudian theory, recognising other forces in personal development, and reflecting some of the emerging debates about gender and society.

Psychoanalytic criticism returns to its classical roots, however, in an article by Vicky Hartman (1983), which reads like a throwback to Gui's era. It is difficult to trace her background, but she acknowledges the advice and assistance of a social psychologist with an obvious interest in psychoanalysis, and of a lecturer in English. 'Through allusion to relevant myth, and directly by plot, Shakespeare acknowledges the oedipal problem', Hartman writes.⁴⁷ Her article is an exploration of the play's 'various permutations of the oedipal predicament ... nearly every variety of the oedipus-complex is acknowledged'.⁴⁸ There is no mention, however, of a *homosexual* oedipal resolution, or recognition of contemporary gender issues. Hartman's view of the play can be contrasted with the reading by Shirley Nelson Garner, whose article was written two years earlier (see below), with a quite different reading of the oedipal elements.

There is much in Hartman's paper that is reminiscent of Gui: she plays with proper names,

⁴⁶ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', pp. 169-204.

⁴⁷ Hartman, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*', p. 363.

⁴⁸ Hartman, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*', pp. 364-5.

as in her suggestion that 'Peter' is slang for penis (which is possible), and her wondering if 'Quince', being tart and fruity, is 'perhaps' a variant of, 'cunt' (which seems improbable). She treats Bottom as a child, 'an egocentric character unable to discern linguistic and sexual distinctions, and possessing only the infantile concerns of eating and sleeping'; and as androgynous, on the rather odd basis that his character is anal because there is no difference to the child between men's and women's bottoms.⁴⁹ This is close to Gui's remark about Elizabethan babies having bottoms.⁵⁰ This again is classic Freudian theory, that before the Oedipus complex all children are bisexual. I am reminded of Gui in Hartman's detailed and imaginative etymology, and the employment of such allusions in the service of proving the constant oedipal references in the play.

Tabooed love objects are a further indication of an oedipal interpretation. The lovers' woodland experiences are equivalent to incestuous fantasies. Hartman thinks that 'most characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* initially pursue only impossible love relationships ... only mature Theseus and Hippolyta do not insist on inappropriate, tabooed love objects'.⁵¹ She observes that the young lovers choose as partners those they cannot have. Hartman adds her own fiction to the fictional when she assumes that when Demetrius first wooed Helena she did not love him, but that when Helena began to return his love Demetrius changed his love object to Hermia. Such extraneous material imposes a psychoanalytic gloss, to the detriment of both psychoanalysis and the text.⁵² In what seems like a psychoanalytic equivalent of everything ending happily ever after,

⁴⁹ Hartman, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*', p. 357.

⁵⁰ I find no psychoanalyst commenting on 'bottom' in the way a number of literary critics do, such as Louis Montrose: 'Bottom's name relates him to the practice of his craft ... "the core on which the weaver's skein of yarn was wound" ... also ... to his lowly position in the temporal order, to his social baseness' ('A kingdom of shadows', in D. Kehler ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Critical Essays* (London: Routledge, 2001) p. 219).

⁵¹ Hartman, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*', p. 360.

⁵² William Sights is right in contrasting her approach to the text as overdetermined ('The changeling in the *Dream*', *Studies in English Literature*, 28.2 (1988), p. 271).

‘the play closes not with the surrealistic and experimental eroticism of the night, but with the mature and solemn commitment of marriage on a fine midsummer day’.⁵³ It would seem that oedipal conflicts must be resolved.

More refreshing is an approach to both the play and to the Oedipus complex put forward by an American psychoanalyst, Julius Heuscher, writing in 1989.⁵⁴ The names of many of the characters are significant to him for a very different reason than the sexual punning in Hartman’s article. He concentrates upon the names as allusions to various myths, and through such allusions he sets out different levels of oedipal conflict. ‘The story,’ he writes, ‘reveals profound insights into the complex, stratified, often paradoxical, existential features of human relations’.⁵⁵

He suggests that there are five levels or degrees of human consciousness that are represented by different characters. Theseus, Hippolyta and Egeus are the highest in rank and degree of consciousness, having archetypal qualities. ‘Theseus, Hippolyta, and Egeus portray the turmoil and tragedies of triangular – or oedipal – conflicts on the highest level’.⁵⁶ The Oedipus theme is clearly represented in the mythic father-son relationship of Theseus and Egeus: Theseus, like Oedipus, unwittingly becomes guilty of his father Egeus’s death, when his father drowns on seeing Theseus’s ship returning with black sails.⁵⁷ Theseus’s later life involves a number of oedipal conflicts, such as the relationship between his son Hippolytus and Phaedra. Theseus steals Helena from her twin brothers, and attempts to steal Kore, the wife of Hades, for which he is imprisoned for a time in hell. No wonder, then, that ‘it was Theseus alone who empathically understood Oedipus, banned from Thebes,

⁵³ Hartman, ‘*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*’, p. 365.

⁵⁴ Heuscher, ‘Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch’, pp. 319-27.

⁵⁵ Heuscher, ‘Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch’, p. 319.

⁵⁶ Heuscher, ‘Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch’, p. 324.

⁵⁷ Theseus had forgotten to change them to white as a sign that he was alive.

and who offered him warm hospitality in Athens'.⁵⁸

Heuscher appears to take his interpretation beyond the play itself, presuming of course that this mythological biography of Theseus would not just have been known to Shakespeare in adopting that name for the Duke of Athens, but was the reason for choosing it: 'Shakespeare's choice of the names of the protagonists seems far from arbitrary'.⁵⁹

Although the play opens and closes with Theseus's and Hippolyta's wedding, the audience's attention is directed much more to the fate of the four young lovers. The second level of consciousness belongs to them, and again reflects triangular conflicts. Egeus, the father of Theseus in Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* and in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as well as in the play the father of Hermia, links these two levels. Egeus tries to preserve his oedipal tie to Hermia, and the result is that other triangular relationships ensue. Heuscher observes that the names given to Lysander and Demetrius reflect historical figures, generals who each conquered Athens. He makes an interesting observation about Lysander and Demetrius, that each has to go through the experience of falling in love with someone else to appreciate the authenticity of their first love. He highlights the 'deep and lasting friendship' between Hermia and Helena, enabling them to weather the storms of falling in love. Otherwise, he passes over the women in the play, Hippolyta, Hermia and Helena, except as objects of male rivalry. The young women are only forced into conflict with each other by the behaviour of the men.

⁵⁸ Heuscher, 'Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch', p. 321.

⁵⁹ Heuscher, 'Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch', p. 322. There are several citations in Shakespeare's time of Theseus's kindness to Oedipus, without mention of Oedipus's previous history.

Heuscher interprets the characters in these first two levels as representing respectively the Jungian idea of collective and personal consciousness. This is a rare example of a Jungian interpretation.⁶⁰ The third level is represented by the artisans, and ‘their plain and forthright portrayal of what on the other levels seems more complex reveals the tragico-comic qualities of the interpersonal conflicts’.⁶¹ Bottom is a link to the fourth level, the fairy world, which the four lovers are drawn into it but never directly encounter. Heuscher suggests that Bottom’s relationship with Titania may have been evoked by his trying so hard to engage with his role as Pyramus. This level and the wood both represent the subconscious, where the conflicts involving Theseus, Hippolyta and Egeus are illustrated in the disagreements between Oberon and Titania over the Indian boy. Like Jacobson, Heuscher portrays the oedipal issue from a mother’s view in Titania’s possessive attachment to the boy. She has to fall in love with an ass in order to break free of her strong oedipal tie to the boy. She needs to allow the boy to grow up, and to re-discover her attachment to Oberon. Unlike Jacobson, Heuscher makes no attempt to identify the boy as a substitute penis: that particular Freudian theory has passed into history. A new generation of feminist psychoanalysts had once again put forward their own theories of a woman’s psychological development, and this time were being heard.

There remains a fifth level, which Heuscher equates with the ‘spirits of another sort’ (OBERON, 3.2.388), a level to which Oberon refers, ‘who remain permanently enveloped in darkness: ghosts, damned souls, and others; of these beings the play does not say

⁶⁰ Although the split between Freudians and Jungians to some extent has continued to the present day, the database includes Jungian journals, although Heuscher’s article is not in one of those.

⁶¹ Heuscher, ‘Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch’, p. 323.

anything else'.⁶² Heuscher seems to suggest that this is the realm of Oberon and Titania, pointing to Titania's name as an allusion to the Titans driven into the underworld by the Olympian gods.

While the identification of mythological origins of the names of some of the characters is interesting, and the five levels of consciousness starts as a promising idea, Heuscher's paper is disappointing in failing firstly to follow through his equation of the five levels of characters with five levels of the psyche, and secondly to show how the oedipal conflicts might resonate with the different levels of the psyche. When he writes that 'the spectator must participate in all of these levels in order to get the most out of the play', and that 'no one is free of the triangular conflicts portrayed at various levels in the play', do the different levels connect with each spectator's oedipal issues?⁶³ Furthermore, the title of his paper suggests he is concentrating on Theseus and Hippolyta as if they were on the couch: are the five levels, and the different examples of oedipal conflict, therefore all expressions of their own conflictual relationship? This is never made explicit.

From Gui through to Heuscher, the Oedipus complex is identified as variously applying to Bottom, to the women characters, to virtually every combination of characters. The two earlier papers by Gui and Jacobson illustrate a thorough exposition of Freud's theory of psychological development towards resolution of the complex. The play's text and the relationships of the play's characters are forced into oedipal patterns, yielding little satisfaction for the literary critic save as examples of ingenuity and creativeness as well as determination to prove psychoanalytic dogma.

⁶² Heuscher, 'Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch', p. 323.

⁶³ Heuscher, 'Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch', p. 325.

Ravich and Goldstein in fact say very little about the complex, but the merit of Goldstein's paper is that he acknowledges that oedipal conflicts are as much about rivalry as about love and sex, and that gender identity is more about power relations than it is about working through a male or a female version of the Oedipus complex. Hartman's analysis, like Gui's and Jacobson's is too bent on illustrating Freudian theory; and Heuscher introduces some interesting ideas, but fails to develop them either towards a deeper appreciation of the play, or a deeper knowledge of the human psyche.

Perhaps the problem in these examples of psychoanalytic criticism is that with the exception of Goldstein the authors are too bound by a wish to identify those features of their theoretical position that distinguish them both as psychologists and critics. By the late 1970s there was questioning within psychoanalysis of the shelf-life of the complex. Writing about clinical work rather than about literary criticism, Elliot Adler in 2010 reflected on the change that had taken place in psychoanalysis, and on a question this change had posed for him: 'Does one need such an orienting idea (the Oedipus complex) to successfully navigate the inordinate complexity of analytic experience?'⁶⁴ I suggest that a similar question can be asked of psychoanalytic criticism: does one need the Oedipus complex to engage successfully with the complexity of a Shakespeare play? On the evidence of the discussion of the concept in psychoanalytic criticism I suggest not. It has not been superseded in psychoanalytic criticism by other aspects of love relations, which are capable of throwing fresh light upon the play. It is interesting to note that the papers discussed above are for the most part in the third quarter of the twentieth century,

⁶⁴ E. Adler, 'The effacing of the Oedipus complex', *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 30 (2010), p. 542. There are examples of questioning of the centrality of the complex from the last quarter of the twentieth century, following Hans Leowald's seminal paper 'The waning of the Oedipus complex', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 27 (1979), pp. 751-775: 'To a significant extent, psychoanalytic interest has shifted away from this nuclear conflict of the transference neuroses and onto the narcissistic ... in which oedipal conflicts are held not to be central'(p. 754).

before Oedipus had been allowed to enter the sacred grove at Colonus. But where psychoanalytic critics have left off, some psychoanalytic-literary critics have demonstrated refreshing possibilities for oedipal interpretations, which I now examine.

The Oedipus complex – psychoanalytic-literary critics

One of the differences between psychoanalytic-literary critics and the majority of the psychoanalytic critics writing about oedipal issues in the play is the way the former extend their application of oedipal theory in novel ways. I suggest that there are reasons why that group is more creative in their use of the theory. Firstly psychoanalytic-literary critics are not so hidebound in employing psychoanalytic theory as some psychoanalysts, whose psychoanalytic training has on the whole been dogmatic, allowing little questioning of the basic tenets.⁶⁵ While there have been important developments in psychoanalysis these are not generally reflected in psychoanalytic criticism of the play. Secondly, although some psychoanalytic thinking since the 1990s has been more open to accepting a homosexual orientation as an alternative resolution of the Oedipus complex, this had not happened when most of the psychoanalytic papers examined above were written.⁶⁶ Up to that point, as in American psychiatry, homosexuality was seen as pathological.⁶⁷ The later freeing of homosexuality and gender questions from their pathological associations might have opened up these other interpretations of the Oedipus complex in the play. Here again psychoanalytic-literary critics have not been so hidebound.

⁶⁵ I have referred to this important point for understanding psychoanalytic criticism in chapter 1.

⁶⁶ Nancy Chodorow cites one analyst who sets out twelve possible oedipal constellations for a boy. Only six of these are heterosexual and of these only one is what has been called 'normal' (*Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities* (London: University of California Press, 1994), p. 43).

⁶⁷ The *American Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the Bible for psychiatrists all over the world, did not remove homosexuality from the category of mental disorder until 1973, and even then included one form as an apparent disorder. This was not removed until 1986.

For example, in the article by Gerald Jacobson discussed above, the relation between Egeus and Hermia is seen in terms of a classical psychoanalytic definition, as a daughter's repressed and projected incestuous wishes towards her father. This can be compared with an article by an American literary critic writing in a psychoanalytic journal in 1973: S.C.V. Stetner introduces patriarchy into his discussion of the father-daughter relationship. Although concentrating on *The Taming of the Shrew*, in a brief reference to Egeus and his attack on Lysander for his cunning filching of his daughter's heart (1.1.36), Stetner writes:

That accusation is a standard one, arising apparently out of the foolish heart of fatherhood. Many a father entertains darkly the wistful notion that since he is his daughter's god, only magic and spells and other such unnatural trickery could lure his child away from the shrine at his feet.⁶⁸

The closest a psychoanalytic critic of the play comes to recognising gender bias is Goldstein when he employs the term 'patrist' to describe Hippolyta's 'male' role in her Amazon society.⁶⁹ It is only much later that some psychoanalysts realise just how much power structures in society have dominated theories that focus on the Oedipus complex and that privilege heterosexuality.⁷⁰

This difference is seen also in the way American English professor Shirley Nelson Garner (1981) emphasises gender issues, and James Calderwood (1992) the cultural context. Compare that to Vicky Hartman's article discussed above, writing around the

⁶⁸ S.C.V. Stetner, 'Baptista and his daughters', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 60 (1973), pp. 229-30.

⁶⁹ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 189. The term is first used in psychoanalytic journals by an American psychoanalyst, J. S. Peck in 1963, where he describes how American history has been male dominated, leading to attitudes which could as well be called patriarchal – or as he says 'identification with the father' ('Anti-intellectualism: psychoanalytic notes on a cultural trait', *American Imago*, 20 (1963), p. 388.

⁷⁰ See for example, N. Altman, 'Whiteness', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 75 (2006), pp. 45-72.

same time. Garner, writing in the journal *Women's Studies*, alludes to both Freud, and incidentally to Goldstein, and firmly relates the homoerotic elements in the play to patriarchy. Hartman, as I have shown, pushes oedipal interpretations to their traditional limits. Garner sees the relationship between Titania and the boy as 'clearly erotic' and that between Titania and the Indian queen as one that 'threatens patriarchal and heterosexual values'.⁷¹ Titania is not just attracted to the boy, but to the boy as his mother's son. Like other literary critics, she looks at the possibility of a homoerotic attachment of Oberon to the boy, arguing furthermore that the winning of the boy by Oberon from Titania is 'at the center of the play', securing the exclusive love of Titania and the satisfaction of his homoerotic desires.⁷²

But Theseus and Egeus too 'want to attain the exclusive love of a woman, and also accommodate their homoerotic desires'.⁷³ She describes Hippolyta as an androgynous woman. When played originally by a man, Theseus and Hippolyta would have looked like a homosexual couple. She suggests that Egeus wants to bind Demetrius to himself through Hermia. Garner cites one of Freud's three essays in his 'Contributions to the Psychology of Love', referring to Theseus as an example of those who make a special object choice, seen in his frequent desertion of women.⁷⁴ She is critical of Goldstein as an example of male critics who regard Oberon as having a right to Titania's love.⁷⁵ As Tredell reflects, Garner 'poses key challenges to the *Dream*'s representations of gender

⁷¹ Garner, 'Jack shall have Jill', p. 49.

⁷² Garner, 'Jack shall have Jill', p. 50. Douglas Green similarly cites a number of lines to demonstrate homosexual attachment, including Oberon's 'sodomitical intentions' towards the changeling boy, the 'unthinkable (lesbian) love of Titania for her votaress', and the same-sex allusions in the relationship between Hermia and Helena, and their own passage 'from girlhood to womanhood' ('Preposterous pleasures: queer theories and A Midsummer Night's Dream' in Dorothea Kehler ed., *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 369-97.

⁷³ Garner, 'Jack shall have Jill', p. 52.

⁷⁴ Garner, 'Jack shall have Jill', notes 12 and 13, pp. 62-3.

⁷⁵ Garner, 'Jack shall have Jill', note on pp. 61-2.

and sexuality, and to those critics who have accepted such representations as the natural order of things', including of course much psychoanalytic criticism.⁷⁶ She draws upon Freud's 'Contributions' in a way that no psychoanalytic critic of the play does.

There is virtually no reference in psychoanalytic critics of the play to the political situation in Elizabethan England, but the psychoanalytic-literary critic Calderwood (1992) links the 'phallic fatherly No', that in Freudian/Lacanian theory leads to the repression of the child's longing for mother, to the Tudor suppression of the Virgin Mother.⁷⁷ Even if Elizabeth was the Virgin Queen in the Virgin Mother's place she continued to enforce the No to attachment to the Mother of God. Calderwood thus extends his interpretation of the oedipal issues to include culture and questions of gender dominance. He draws a parallel between Hippolyta and Hermia, the one representing a society of women, and the other an individual woman subject to the male yet resisting male dominance.⁷⁸ This difference underlines how the incorporation of gender, cultural and historical factors is hardly evident in psychoanalytic criticism.

I have already drawn attention to the way that Freud's original definition of the Oedipus complex was about a young boy's attachment to mother and rivalry with father, and I have questioned just how appropriate it is to use the term to refer to adult rivalries. I have to some extent commended Gui as employing the theory properly in relation to infancy and childhood in the way he interprets Bottom's dream. Contrast, however, two more comprehensive and original treatments of the Oedipus complex, in slightly different ways, by Allen Dunn (1988) and Thomas Frosch (2007). Although separated

⁷⁶ Tredell, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 91.

⁷⁷ Calderwood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 6.

⁷⁸ Not that Freud neglected the cultural influence on gender relations – see, for example, "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness", 1908, where he observes and is critical of the different moral standards required by society for men and women in sexual matters.

by nearly twenty years, Dunn writing in *Shakespeare Studies* and Frosch in *American Imago*, both highlight the significance of the Indian boy, seldom seen on stage but a key part of the Oberon/Titania conflict.⁷⁹ The strength of their interpretations is that they write not just about individual characters with their own oedipal conflicts, but about the play as a whole, how it represents a movement back to childhood and then forward to oedipal resolution. They employ the oedipal situations much more fully than any psychoanalytic critic. They do more than illustrate the Oedipus complex, using it to develop a reading about regression. In psychoanalytic theory this refers both to adults acting out in their relationships issues that are more appropriate to a child's oedipal stage of development. Regression is a psychological retreat to an earlier age in an attempt to resolve earlier failures in psychological or emotional development; and from a regressed position, to work through earlier unresolved issues and move forward towards more mature love.

Allen Dunn argues for an oedipal interpretation of the *Dream* in the main romance of the four lovers and in the fairy world, with Bottom and the parody play acting as a link to the oedipal theme.⁸⁰ He places the Indian boy in a central position: indeed there is a sense for Dunn in which the Indian boy appears to initiate the action in the wood through what happens there, it being described as his dream or his fantasy. Pressing the parallel between the real world of Athens and the fantasy world of the wood, Dunn shows how in both worlds there is an oedipal struggle.

⁷⁹ Peter Holland records one such appearance in 1865, and another in Coghill's staging in 1945 (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 157). Halio refers to the 1992 National Theatre production directed by Lepage, where Titania at first appeared breast-feeding a baby (*Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 124). I refer below to Max Reinhardt's 1935 film and Adrian Noble's 2001 film, each featuring a boy, although in different ways.

⁸⁰ Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream'. Dunn's discussion of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is referred to the chapter 3.

The difference between the world of Athens and the forest is not the difference between reality and fantasy but the difference between two types of plot action ... the play's subject is sexual conflict, and I will argue that both plots address the same subject matter, albeit in very different forms.⁸¹

The oedipal theme in the romance is familiar, but Dunn admits the fairy drama is 'persistently strange'. It is like a child's fairy story, where the protagonists are generally children, and where 'the narrative perspective reflects a child's point of view, a child's wonder, a child's fears or sense of helplessness'.⁸² The child's conflicts are different from those of the adult romance, since they concern separation, loss and autonomy from the family, especially the mother.⁸³ This childlike state is seen in various ways in the wood: in the lovers who regress to becoming quarrelling children, and in Bottom's infantilisation in Titania's bower. Gui and Hartman also draw attention to this infantilisation, but neither use the observation as subtly as Dunn, who writes: 'Who would imagine that a quarrel over possession of a child would not only disrupt a marriage but throw the entire world into a state of disorder?'⁸⁴ He sees the quarrel between Oberon and Titania over the boy as a conflict that not only infects nature, but the relationships of the various pairs of lovers at the court.

Dunn, like Gui, identifies Bottom and the Indian boy, but in reverse positions: Gui interprets the Indian boy as part of Bottom's dream; Dunn sees Bottom as part of the Indian boy's dream:

⁸¹ Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream', pp. 18-19.

⁸² Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream', pp. 19-20.

⁸³ Psychoanalysts read much into fairy tales – see particularly Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, (London: Penguin Books, 1978), to whom Dunn refers.

⁸⁴ Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream', p. 21.

The boy does not appear as the victim in his own dream. Indeed he does not appear at all. Bottom is infantilized and nurtured as a stand-in, a caricature of childish appetites and dependencies. He exemplifies the confused and regressive sexuality of the pre-oedipal mother-son relationship.⁸⁵

The Indian boy's need to part from mother (the Oedipus complex) because of his newly found sexuality is projected in his dream on to Bottom. The boy is straining to get away from the possessiveness of mother, to become a young man, part of Oberon's train. While this is as inventive as Gui, it is no more strange to think of the 'Dream' in the play's title as the Indian boy's, than to think of it as Gui does as Bottom's dream; or as Calderwood does, when he proposes that it could be Theseus's dream.⁸⁶

What Dunn's device demonstrates, for those who wish to see a psychological unity between the various plots of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is that the entire play can be interpreted as having a strong oedipal current running through it. Dunn's working of the oedipal theme is richer than is evidenced in psychoanalytic critics, and actually draws much more on Freudian theory in its identification of regression as serving progression towards maturity – similar in a way to Goldstein's concentration on an identity crisis as a melting pot. In Dunn's view, Oberon and Titania are the parents of a child's past: 'parents of the oedipus'.⁸⁷ Theseus and Hippolyta are the parents of the present, themselves making a transition as the four young lovers do, from violent sexuality (which is as a child sees parental intercourse) into adult sexuality.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream', p. 22.

⁸⁶ Calderwood, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 48-71.

⁸⁷ Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream', p. 23.

⁸⁸ Dunn, 'The Indian Boy's dream', pp. 23-4.

But even Dunn's psychoanalytic interpretation of the play is capped by Thomas Frosch's (2007). This is not surprising since Dunn shows little evidence of acquaintance with psychoanalytic interpretations of the play, while Frosch refers not only to other literary criticism, but to psychoanalytic critics such in Gui (1952), Holland (1979), Hartman (1983) and Hinely (1987).⁸⁹ His paper is perhaps the most thorough example of those discussed in this thesis, with its awareness of both previous psychoanalytic criticism and literary criticism.

Like Dunn (and, to be fair to him, Gui) Frosch believes that the family and the child constitute a central part of Shakespeare's comedy, and that Shakespeare provides a 'complex portrayal of childhood and the childlike'.⁹⁰ By foregrounding this, Frosch draws attention to a theme that is clearly in Dunn, whose work he acknowledges, but which is neglected in many commentaries on the play that discuss oedipal and pre-oedipal dynamics:

I will be analyzing a psychological development in the play from an idealized voyage back to childhood to a return to a reconstituted adulthood and then, in the least studied part of the play's narrative structure, to a new and different idealization of childhood.⁹¹

Again like Dunn, Frosch suggests that it is the Indian boy who is 'the cause of the quarrel upon which much of the action depends'.⁹² There is a kind of regression in the

⁸⁹ Frosch, 'The missing child', pp. 485-511. There is another paper that mentions the stolen child in the *Dream*, but only as one example among many in fairy-tales, novels and mythology, before dealing with an element of child analysis which is not relevant to interpretation of the play (R.V. Frankiel, 'The stolen child: a fantasy, a wish, a source of countertransference', *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 12 (1985), pp. 417-430).

⁹⁰ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 486.

⁹¹ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 486.

⁹² Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 486.

first act that moves from the adults Theseus and Hippolyta (Frosch might also have included Egeus) to the adolescent lovers, then to ‘the craftsmen, who, with their naïveté, their misuse and mispronunciation of words, and their confusions of male and female, animate and inanimate, and make-believe and reality, are child-like-adults’.⁹³ Act 2 then moves to the fairies, and ‘the spirit of early childhood, especially in Puck, who can instantly transform anything, including himself, into anything else’. This again suggests ‘a regressive structure that culminates when the lovers all finally fall asleep in act 4’.⁹⁴ And ‘Bottom becomes like an infant in Titania’s bower, where he is fed, lovingly tended to, and treated as ... “His Majesty the Baby”’, and himself falls asleep.⁹⁵ If this seems to echo Gui, Gui’s intense concentration on Bottom (and ultimately finding a cause in Shakespeare himself) means that all else in the play is made to serve that purpose. Frosch instead suggests that this ‘magical, romantic, wishful view of regression’ is a response to the frustrations of the adult world of Athens. In the play ‘a failed, rigid, unsatisfying adult order is broken down, and we go back to the beginning to start again’.⁹⁶ It is a neat definition of regression.

Frosch, again like Dunn, takes the oedipal issue back to its roots in childhood, unlike so many psychoanalytic critics of the play who are drawn to the *adult* rivalries. If the Oedipus complex is to be more than an alternative term for ‘rivalry’, either between lovers or between the generations, it must include more than a description of the present.

Frosch refers to the patriarchal aspect, largely missing in psychoanalytic criticism. The forest scenes subvert patriarchal authority. He says that the relationships between Titania

⁹³ Frosch, ‘The missing child’, pp. 486-7.

⁹⁴ Frosch, ‘The missing child’, p. 487.

⁹⁵ Frosch, ‘The missing child’, p. 487. ‘His Majesty the Baby’ comes from Freud’s paper on narcissism, examined below.

⁹⁶ Frosch, ‘The missing child’, p. 487.

and the Indian boy and between Titania and Bottom exclude Oberon as the dominant male, although I see Oberon as controlling the relationship between Titania and Bottom. Frosch writes: 'When that pairing, as in Titania and Bottom, provokes questions of sexuality, it raises the specter of not only the oedipal defeat of the father but also a full-scale return of the pre-patriarchal culture of the mother goddess and her son-lover'.⁹⁷ The end of Act 4 sees a return to the power of the father. Now, however, Theseus is a changed man, although Oberon remains a man who has 'crushed' Titania and symbolically castrated Bottom. As Frosch makes it clear towards the conclusion of his essay, there remains an ambivalence as to whether the oedipal issues have been (or can ever be) fully resolved. Such a conclusion to the play, which still leaves loose ends, seems closer to psychological reality than those of critics such as Hartman (and perhaps also Dunn), who want oedipal issues to be resolved.

The question of how far the play's oedipal issues have been resolved as it ends marks Frosch out from most psychoanalytic critics, and yet to my mind reflects more closely Freud's view of the outcome of therapy: it is not that all will be 'happy ever after' but as Freud wrote, that 'much will be gained if we succeed in transforming your hysterical misery into common unhappiness. With a mental life that has been restored to health you will be better armed against that unhappiness'.⁹⁸ Frosch acknowledges that the child of the marriage might turn out like the nightmarish son of Theseus and Hippolyta. Some marriages will end unhappily, and all children, Frosch asserts, have to go through pre-oedipal and oedipal struggles and through the adolescent struggle with parents. The allusion to Hippolytus is relevant because it shows that the worst may happen; and in a

⁹⁷ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 491.

⁹⁸ Sigmund Freud, 'The Psychotherapy of Hysteria', 1893, *Standard Edition*, Volume II (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955, pp. 298.

bold statement Frosch puts forward the suggestion that there is a sense in which Hippolytus is the missing child of the play.⁹⁹

We can thus understand why the Indian boy, the cause of tempestuous conflicts that disorder nature, never appears. Shakespeare uses him to create a symbolic presence, looming over the world of the play, of the child of the future, who is still unborn; the child of the past, who is no longer visible; and the child of the present, who, after infancy, is never as much our visible possession as we want it to be.¹⁰⁰

I find support for the focus in Frosch and Dunn upon the Indian boy in a device employed by Adrian Noble in his 2001 film of his RSC production of the *Dream*.¹⁰¹ In his 1994 stage production there was no boy on stage, the production taking as its starting point Hippolyta's dream. But in the film the start seems to be a small boy's dream. The first frames are of a boy asleep in bed, the book of the play lying open beside him. He gets up in his sleep and peers through a keyhole, seeing Theseus kissing Hippolyta. From that point onwards he is sometimes the observer (or as a psychoanalyst might say, a voyeur): for example, he sees Lysander and Hermia plotting to escape to the wood, and when they kiss he wakes up briefly from his dream screaming. Sometimes he mingles amongst the actors, including at the end of the play when he is lifted up by the whole cast. Sometimes the boy seemingly controls the action, as in the shot where he is turning a giant globe, or opens the curtains on the *Pyramus and Thisbe* stage.

⁹⁹ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 504.

¹⁰⁰ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 506. The significance of the boy is very briefly referred to in two earlier psychoanalytic sources. In a review of a French study of psychoanalysis and politics J. Naiman refers to the plague in *Oedipus Rex*, the consequence of incest and parricide, and the plague in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the consequence of the quarrel over the changeling boy – the boy being seen as a phallic symbol ('Review of L'Inconscient du Politique (The Unconscious of Politics) by Pierre Kauffman (Paris: 1988)', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 59 (1990), p. 161). M. Kanzer, wonders what might result from delving further into the 'babe' image in Shakespeare. Among several instances of the image, he refers to the controversy over the male child in the *Dream*, but sadly takes it no further (M. Kanzer, 'Imagery in King Lear', *American Imago*, 22 (1965), p. 12).

¹⁰¹ Noble, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [DVD].

It has been suggested that the introduction of the boy, and the reference in the film to children's books, were attempts to make the play more attractive to the child viewer. Halio comes to the conclusion that the presence of the boy is 'gratuitous'.¹⁰² He thinks that changing the focus from an adult's to a boy's mind makes the sexual implications 'fuzzy'; this, despite the film containing a brief scene of Bottom having obvious and loud sex with Titania. Yet given the type of interpretations considered above about the centrality of the child, Noble's interpretation is far from fuzzy, and Halio's own description of the film belies such a view: when the boy is disturbed by some of what he sees, and does not always understand what he sees, this sounds remarkably like witnessing a primal scene, as appears the case when he sees Theseus and Hippolyta through the keyhole, or watches Bottom and Titania float off together on the water, perhaps even witnessing their sexual union, which occurs in the next frame. The *Sight and Sound* review that Halio cites suggests the film presents the play as an adult entertainment with its stress on sexual undercurrents.¹⁰³ It is as if on film we see an illustration of the play's appeal to the child in the adult, in this case working through the shock of witnessing the primal scene to a point where the boy in fantasy can join fearlessly with the different couples, as he is embraced by them all in the final frames.¹⁰⁴

Much earlier, Max Reinhardt's 1935 film of the play includes many scenes in which a happy young Indian boy, complete with turban, constantly appears in Titania's presence, until the point where Titania begins to caress Bottom. Then, very realistically, the Indian boy cries and turns away from Titania, welcoming Oberon's attention. Thereafter he is

¹⁰² Halio, *Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 143 and p. 150.

¹⁰³ Mark Sinker, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', *Sight and Sound*, 7.1 (1997), p. 41, cited by Halio, *Shakespeare in Performance*, p. 149.

¹⁰⁴ Peter Holland also refers to the 1935 Reinhardt film as showing the boy (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 157).

attached to Oberon to the extent that he rides on Oberon's shoulders and has a miniature head-piece that matches Oberon's. Despite Halio's verdict on this as 'interpolated sentimentality', Reinhardt's device of the boy is a really profound portrayal of an oedipal situation, the young boy pushed out by mother's love-making, and identifying with the father figure.

Reflecting upon the way the Oedipus complex is treated by both psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary criticism, it is clear that each critic is presenting a personal reading of the play. The metaphors of psychoanalytic theory are ways of expressing and highlighting different expressions of love, which in themselves reflect different attitudes that one person or one character has towards another. What is clear from comparing psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary readings of the oedipal elements in the play is that the latter generally seem to have a wider appreciation of Freud's ideas, referring to his theories more comprehensively. It is curious that this is so, but an explanation may be found in literary critics reading psychoanalysis as a set of fresh stimulating ideas, whereas the over-familiarity of psychoanalytic critics with what has become a rather tired trope means that they are not exploring the richness of their theories in the same way.

Inevitably, any one of these interpretations is subjective. There is no way in which there can be a definitive description of how the Oedipus complex might inform the *Dream*. The particular appeal of Frosch and Dunn to the psychologically minded reader is that they neatly integrate literary interpretations with psychoanalytic theory, using the Oedipus complex as Freud originally intended, to reflect upon the child's intense relationship to each of the parents. There is a sense in which Frosch (and to some extent

Dunn) do for the *Dream* what Freud did for *Oedipus Rex*. Their concentration upon the child echoes Freud's belief that the appeal of Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex* is that 'everyone in the audience was once a budding Oedipus in fantasy'.¹⁰⁵ Their interpretations provide a good explanation (that no psychoanalytic critics has ventured to suggest), as to the appeal of this play, one that provides many children with their first experience of Shakespeare; and which, I suggest, speaks to the child in the adult. Frosch approximates to this notion when he describes the play as 'Shakespeare's complex portrayal of childhood and the childlike';¹⁰⁶ and elsewhere writes that 'we come out of the regressive forest, and in "Pyramus and Thisbe" we sacrifice the childlike, but that sacrifice turns out to be proleptic, enabling the childlike to live within us in an acceptable way'.¹⁰⁷ In one of his final remarks: he uses the phrase 'the childlike in ourselves'.¹⁰⁸

But he does not give this the full force that psychoanalytic aesthetics could give the play, as a work of art enacting the unconscious memories and desires of the reader, or the members of the audience.¹⁰⁹ As Freud says: 'The imaginative writer has this licence among many others, that he can select his world of representation so that it either coincides with the realities we are familiar with or departs from them in what particulars he pleases'.¹¹⁰ I suggest that Shakespeare, in choosing to show rivalries of love in young adult and adult relationships, conveys situations in the *Dream* that adults recognise from their own adolescent and adult experiences as well as, at a less conscious level, in their early childhood.

¹⁰⁵ Masson, *The Complete Letters*, p. 272.

¹⁰⁶ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 486.

¹⁰⁷ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 505.

¹⁰⁸ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 507.

¹⁰⁹ For example, Freud, 'Creative Writers and Day-dreaming', 1908; E. Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (New York: International Universities Press, 1952).

¹¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', 1919, *Standard Edition*, Volume XVII (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 249.

Adults who fall in love tend to regress initially to a childlike state, and often have to work through intense feelings in their fantasies and strivings towards more mature realistic adult kinds of loving, including the rivalry that the Oedipus story describes. None of the psychoanalytic or psychoanalytic-literary critics take the step (although Frosch gets close) of identifying this aspect of the Oedipus complex, whereby it can be argued that the popularity of the play is accounted for in its psychological realism, albeit disguised in magic and in the fairy world setting, in farcical quarrels and in slapstick comedy. What is missing in all these critics is the idea that the truths that the play reveals concern the exigencies of childlike love. The *Dream* at one level enacts the experiences of many young children, experiences to which Freud and his followers have attached the name 'Oedipus complex'. The play shows men – and it is the men, despite efforts to include the women as having their own version of the complex – behaving like children.

However, this concentration upon the Oedipus complex, both in clinical work and in psychoanalytic criticism, needs to be contrasted with the comparative neglect of two other features of loving relations that are identified by Freud. The first of these is narcissistic love. This is briefly mentioned by Frosch in relation to Bottom and by Goldstein in relation to Demetrius, but no psychoanalytic critic of the play has given this important part of Freudian and post-Freudian theory the attention it deserves.

Narcissism

A further description of a different type of love appears in Freud's 1914 paper 'On Narcissism'.¹¹¹ In this essay Freud postulates that the self can become a love object, and that love choices can be projections of oneself or the ideal self: 'the projection of the ego ideal explains the overestimation of the love object by the lover'.¹¹² In other words, one form of narcissism is when person A, normally through lack of sufficient love and nurturing in infancy, loves himself more than others; and/or seeks love from person B for his or her own gratification and without concern for person B. A second form of narcissism is when person A projects out her or his narcissistic need to be loved on to person B, and loves herself or himself through idealising person B. Freud describes both forms as a perversion of love.

But Freud distinguishes between primary and secondary narcissism. Primary narcissism in infancy is necessary for the later development of what I might call 'give-and-take' loving relationships. Primary narcissism is not regarded by Freud as a perversion but as part of the instinct of self-preservation.¹¹³ This narcissistic need for self-protection is also seen in childhood when personal setbacks, or what Shakespeare described as 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' (HAMLET, *Hamlet*, 3.1.58), result in narcissistic wounds: examples of such wounds are a basic lack of self-esteem, or the response to debilitating damage to self-esteem. Freud gives the example of a sick person, who retreats into a narcissistic position (or egoism): 'a person who is tormented by organic pain and discomfort gives up his interest in the things of the external world, in so far as they do not concern his suffering. Closer observation teaches us that he also withdraws

¹¹¹ Sigmund Freud, 'On Narcissism' (1914), p. 133.

¹¹² M. S. Bergmann, 'Freud's three theories of love', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 36 (1988), p. 655.

¹¹³ Freud, 'On Narcissism', pp. 73-4.

libidinal interest from his love-objects: so long as he suffers, he ceases to love'.¹¹⁴ He also writes: 'A strong egoism is a protection against falling ill, but in the last resort we must begin to love in order not to fall ill, and we are bound to fall ill if, in consequence of frustration, we are unable to love'.¹¹⁵

Freud describes the move towards object-love as a shift away from primary narcissism: 'the highest phase of development of which object-libido is capable is seen in the state of being in love, when the subject seems to give up his own personality in favour of an object'.¹¹⁶ 'Object' could be a person, or a cause. Freud includes some highly questionable remarks about the difference between men and women, that men tend towards object-love and women towards narcissistic love. This raises an interesting question about interpretations of narcissism and object-love in the *Dream*, since I shall show that it is the men who behave narcissistically, and that the women are constant in their object-love.¹¹⁷

Narcissism became the focus of some American psychoanalysts in the third quarter of the twentieth century, through the work of Heinz Kohut (1971) on self-psychology, and Otto Kernberg (1995) on narcissistic pathology.¹¹⁸ Both have become significant figures in American psychoanalysis and elsewhere. This focus has not been so prevalent in Britain, where an alternative model, attachment theory, has tended to attract similar

¹¹⁴ Freud, 'On Narcissism', p. 82.

¹¹⁵ Freud, 'On Narcissism', p. 85.

¹¹⁶ Freud, 'On Narcissism', p. 76.

¹¹⁷ Freud, 'On Narcissism', pp. 88-90. To be fair to Freud, he tries 'to give an assurance that this description of the feminine form of erotic life is not due to any tendentious desire on my part to depreciate women' (p. 89) and states that women's object-love towards their baby, who is 'a part of their body', is 'complete' (pp. 89-90).

¹¹⁸ Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*; Kernberg, *Love Relations*, a collection of earlier papers.

interest.¹¹⁹ I find no reference to attachment theory in any of the British or American psychoanalytic critics of the play; and there is a similar absence of reference to narcissism or to self-psychology. Just one psychoanalytic–literary critic, Thomas MacCary (1985), writes about Shakespeare’s comedies as tracing ‘a desire which is originally and even ultimately narcissistic’.¹²⁰ MacCary evidences much his interpretation through reference to Freud and Kernberg.

Of psychoanalytic critics, it is only Goldstein (1973) who refers to narcissism. In describing Demetrius’s behaviour and labelling him as an hysteric he says that such ‘a personality [is] close to that of the narcissist’.¹²¹ The narcissistic nature of Demetrius’s character is even more definite than that: Demetrius does not recognise his fickle treatment with Helena; he uses, as Goldstein observes, a large number of first-person possessive pronouns, and many imperatives; he is only concerned with his own feelings; and in his ‘idle gaud’ speech (DEMETRIUS, 4.1.159-75) he de-personalises Helena and trivialises Hermia. Curiously Goldstein ignores Lysander, when it is obvious that one effect of the love-juice is that Lysander has no perception of what Helena might feel when he declares his love for her. He is equally narcissistic. The question is whether, as Freud might suggest, he has totally given his love to Helena, so she becomes a complete love-object, or whether this total devotion to her is actually an expression of just how narcissistic he has become, having no sense of anything she may feel. In fact more of his lines are devoted to the rejection of Hermia than they are to his praise of Helena, indicating that the effect of the love-juice is to turn him totally against Hermia, with no feeling at all for how she understands what has happened. Even before the application of

¹¹⁹ Despite initial suspicion from the psychoanalytic community (paralleling the initial suspicion in the States of the focus on narcissism and self), attachment theory is now an important part of the psychoanalytic model in all psychoanalytic communities and beyond.

¹²⁰ MacCary, *Friends and Lovers*, p. 3.

¹²¹ Goldstein, ‘Identity crises’, p. 191.

the love-juice, Lysander's pressure on Hermia to lie together seems more for his own benefit than as an expression of his devotion to her.

This could be taken further. Kernberg has an interesting description of the type of man who narcissistically enjoys infantile dependent relations with women, a description that fits the young lovers in the play. He thinks that some men, who have not resolved their competitiveness with the father, are attracted to women who are rebellious against the father.¹²² This appears to fit a description of Hermia, leading to the question of whether Lysander is attracted to her as someone who expresses a rebelliousness that he has not been able to attain. Kernberg obviously links narcissism and the Oedipus complex. He also suggests that one aspect of narcissism is that the boy/man thinks his penis is such that mother/lover will be satisfied with it: if this is applied to the scenes in the wood, the male lovers under the influence of the love-juice seem to see themselves as irresistible to Helena. And under the influence of the love-juice Demetrius and Lysander behave in such a way as to fit Kernberg's description of such men well, as 'eternally little boys'.¹²³

Hermia is not the only rebellious woman; Hippolyta has certainly resisted Theseus in combat rather than submit to his will, making her a similarly tempting 'catch' for Theseus. Theseus prides himself on having wooed Hippolyta with the sword, compelling her to love him (THESEUS, 1.1.16-17); and he colludes with Egeus's narcissism by telling Hermia that her father should be treated as a god (THESEUS, 1.1.47). Helena too shows herself in Act 1 as a strong woman, determined to claim Demetrius for herself. Although the play ends somewhat quietly for the women, it starts with three strong women, whose forthrightness may have attracted the three men to them.

¹²² Kernberg, *Love Relations*, p. 49.

¹²³ Kernberg, *Love Relations*, p. 49.

There is an early letter of Freud's that describes the fate of a colleague, Dr Nathan Weiss, who had committed suicide. His description of Weiss is remarkably similar to what we know of Demetrius (and Egeus, who is equally narcissistic in his wish to make his daughter obey him). Weiss was in love with a young woman who rejected him – but he persisted in wooing her with presents and money until she could no longer refuse him. Before the wedding, however, she asked him to marry her sister (as Hermia might have wished Demetrius to marry Helena) and the marriage was postponed. Despite Freud imploring Weiss to accept that the young woman did not love him, Weiss persisted: 'he just could not bear the thought that a girl would refuse him, and he sacrificed everything recklessly [so as not] to face the world as a failure'.¹²⁴ Her family (like Egeus) persisted in their pressure on the young woman, and eventually she gave in, but within four days of the couple's return from their honeymoon Weiss hanged himself. 'A number of scenes ... opened his eyes to his situation', comments Freud and he died 'from the sum total of his qualities, his pathological self-love coupled with the claims he made for the higher things of life.'¹²⁵

It seems that Goldstein also wants to portray Helena as narcissistic although he does not use the precise term in relation to her. He thinks that her world is 'made up exclusively of the other three lovers', and that while she wants someone (to love?), no-one wants her for herself.¹²⁶ I cannot read Helena (or indeed Hermia in her experience in the wood) in that way. A better description would be that she suffers from a deep narcissistic wound to her self-esteem, first rejected by Demetrius before the play opens. Then in the wood

¹²⁴ E. L. Freud, *Letters*, p. 79.

¹²⁵ E. L. Freud, *Letters*, p. 80.

¹²⁶ Goldstein, 'Identity crises', p. 183.

she is treated as an object by the young men, who are unconcerned for her feelings; and she is lastly rejected by Hermia, her closest friend. I prefer to see her as wounded by circumstances, narcissistic that is for her own self-protection rather than as having a narcissistic trait. It may also be that her pursuit of Demetrius is an aspect of narcissistic self-protection, because in the wood she changes, showing a very poor sense of self, and a profound lack of self-esteem when she perceives the young lovers as cruelly teasing of her. Her various expressions of her self-image (HELENA, 'I am your spaniel, etc.', 2.1.203-7; 'I am as ugly as a bear', 2.2.100) all confirm a deep narcissistic wound.

Hermia also suffers, bullied by her father, condemned by Theseus, rejected by Lysander, and unjustly accused by Helena. Oberon's sadistic treatment of Titania exposes her to the narcissistic wound that comes with shame – 'How came these things to pass' (TITANIA, 4.1.77) might be translated as 'How could I?' And she is deprived of the boy to whom she is so devoted. The previous leader of women, Hippolyta, is subjected to male dominance, although there are at least hints that she has not altogether lost her voice.

Freud believes that one feature of a narcissistic character is shown in homosexuality.¹²⁷ This is of course today a contentious matter in psychoanalysis, with arguments for genetic disposition ranged against psychological reasons for same-sex love. Freud's argument is based on homosexuals seeking love from someone like themselves, of the same gender. I have noted above that Shirley Garner sees Theseus and Egeus as demonstrating a homoerotic feature with Theseus marrying Hippolyta, a masculine woman (acted by a man); and with Egeus in wanting to be attached to Demetrius

¹²⁷ Freud, 'On Narcissism', p. 90.

through Hermia. While I do not subscribe to a simple equation of homosexuality and narcissism, Garner's view of these two men as having homoerotic attachments sits well with the arrogant egotism of Theseus ('I wooed thee with my sword / And won thy love doing thee injuries 1.1.16-17); and of Egeus in his selfish demands on his daughter.

MacCary supports such a view when he discusses Egeus in the context of Shakespeare's late romances: 'the daughter is the image of the father, and ... his love for her is then, in a way, narcissistic and nostalgic, related to a young lover's choice of a friend like himself as his object of desire'.¹²⁸ MacCary cites another example of mimetic love: 'Demetrius only began to love Hermia because Lysander loved her'.¹²⁹ This suggests a narcissistic wish to mirror himself in the image of his friend, which carries a homoerotic undertone. MacCary even includes the Indian boy as representing 'a narcissistic object-choice' for Oberon as protection against the threat of female sexuality, a theme that MacCary sees running through much of the imagery of the play.¹³⁰

I would add that there is a vein of narcissistic love present in other characters: Bottom fancies himself in all the roles in Quince's play, and his over-acting in rehearsal and in performance suggests an over-preening individual. I had occasion above to suggest that it is the male characters involved in couple relationships who demonstrate oedipal issues, rather than the women; and I conclude that there is similarly a clear gender divide in the matter of narcissism. In the *Dream* it is the men in couple relationships who show these particular narcissistic traits (including Bottom, whom Frosch has identified with 'His Majesty the Baby'¹³¹). It is the women, in particular Helena and Hermia, but including Hippolyta and Titania, who suffer narcissistic wounds as a result of the men's actions.

¹²⁸ MacCary, *Friends and Lovers*, p. 143.

¹²⁹ MacCary, *Friends and Lovers*, p. 138.

¹³⁰ MacCary, *Friends and Lovers*, p. 147.

¹³¹ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 487.

The men, threatened by female sexuality, have to inflate their own egos in order to enter into intimate relationships, in the process leeching the women's self-esteem.

Freud and transference-love

In addition to the importance of the theory of narcissism in reflecting upon the behaviour of the male lovers in the *Dream*, Freud's identification of the powerful effect of transference in the therapeutic situation has distinct relevance for the play. A particular feature of the *Dream*, upon which hinges two of the plots, one of the young lovers and the other the quarrel over the Indian boy, is the use of the magic love-juice on the sleeping figure, so that when he or she awakens they fall in love with the first object they see. There are also lines of the play that raise questions about the psychology of love: Helena's description of Demetrius doting upon Hermia describes the way 'Love can transpose form and dignity. / Love looks not with the eyes but with the mind ... Nor hath love's mind of any judgement taste' (HELENA, 1.1.233-236); and Bottom, in a rare moment of insight into the nature of love, and unwittingly into the effect of the love-juice, reflects that 'reason and love keep little company together nowadays' (BOTTOM, 3.1.136-7). Shakespeare describes well a problem for a psychology of love – is it what the lover sees, or what the lover imagines that attracts? Where does reason go when people first fall in love, or, perhaps one could add, fall out of love?

Freud had early on recognised this imaginative dimension to love in a letter to his fiancée Martha Bernays, although he had perhaps not seen the significance of his remark. He writes at a time when circumstances, mainly work and money, had kept them apart for a large number of months. He asks, when they meet again 'won't you discover that your fondness [for Freud] was directed at an idea that you made for yourself, and not at

the living person who perhaps will have on you the same effect as he did a year or two ago?’¹³² One can fall in love, or stay in love with an idea, an idea that is probably of one’s own creation: this seems a penetrating description of love looking with the mind and not with the eye, or rather with the eye that only registers what the mind has seen and wished for.

‘Transference-love’ describes the love that a patient may have for her or his analyst, but that can also occur in the relationship between a student and a teacher, a priest and a parishioner, or in the love some fans feel for celebrities. What distinguishes such situations from other examples of falling in love is that the love-object is normally someone who is inaccessible for that kind of relationship. This type of love is clearly seen in the play following the application of the love-juice, notably in Titania falling in love with an ass; but also in the irrationality of Lysander completely rejecting Hermia and falling in love with Helena. The same could also be said of Demetrius’s *volte-face*. I argue that these remarkable expressions of love deserve more than an oedipal interpretation.

While this type of love may have the same origins as more mature love, and indeed may be present when a person first falls in love with another, it is understood in psychoanalysis as an illusion, recreating an original actual or desired love relationship, which has been lost in the course of development from infancy to adulthood. An authority on Freud’s writing on love, Martin Bergmann, describes transference love as ‘a special hothouse variety of love’, which is a perfect description of the feelings lavished

¹³² E. L. Freud, *Letters*, p. 133.

upon Helena by Lysander and Demetrius.¹³³ Although in psychoanalysis such love cannot be reciprocated by the analyst, if it is handled well it frees the patient, as Bergmann says, for ‘love objects in the real world’.¹³⁴

When Freud introduced both the term and the topic he was giving advice to doctors rather than attempting to explain this expression of love.¹³⁵ He describes management of transference-love as the most difficult part of an analysis, and he writes as if it is only women who fall in love with their analyst. Nevertheless there are some telling indications that what he is describing also applies to Lysander and Demetrius. When the patient falls in love she demands (or in their case, they demand) the love is returned. Her previous symptoms (or their previous attachments to Hermia) are put to one side, and everything is about the transference. Freud uses the image of someone calling ‘fire’ in the middle of a theatrical performance – everything else stops to attend to the fire.

Freud believes that such falling in love is a sign of resistance to the treatment, since the patient is now pre-occupied with these feelings. Others have disagreed, seeing it like Bergmann does as potentially freeing.¹³⁶ Indeed, Lysander’s and Titania’s ‘wakening’ after the application of the antidote is potentially a wakening to a new kind of love for the original person. Demetrius never wakens in that way, since he does not receive the antidote, but his idle gaud speech appears to say that after his ‘transference-love’

¹³³ M. S. Bergmann, ‘Platonic love, transference love, and love in real life,’ *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 30 (1982), p. 107.

¹³⁴ Bergmann, ‘Platonic love, transference love’, p. 108.

¹³⁵ Freud, ‘Observations on Transference-love’, pp.157-171.

¹³⁶ E.g. R. Schafer saw transference-love as having a transitional character on the way towards genuine love (‘The interpretation of transference and the conditions for loving’, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 25.3 (1977), pp. 335-362). L. Friedman observes that Freud in his papers on technique is in a process of redefining transference-love as the essence of treatment rather than a resistance (‘A reading of Freud’s papers on technique’, *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 60 (1991), pp. 564-595).

towards Hermia, he sees Helena in a different way from his previous attachment to her. Freud himself writes that 'transference-love has perhaps a degree less of freedom than the love which appears in ordinary life and is called normal; it displays its dependence on the infantile pattern more clearly and is less adaptable and capable of modification'.¹³⁷ He does not deny that transference-love is a real feeling, although 'being in love in ordinary life, outside analysis, is also more similar to abnormal than to normal mental phenomena.'¹³⁸ Transference-love lacks any regard for the reality of the situation and 'is less sensible, less concerned about consequences and more blind in its valuation of the loved person than we are prepared to admit in the case of normal love'. Again this is an apt description of the love exclaimed by the two young men in the play.¹³⁹

There is a very convincing parallel between the magic potion in the play and Freud's observations on transference-love in a paper by a Massachusetts psychoanalyst, Ellen Pinsky (2014).¹⁴⁰ Freud's paper, she writes is

the quintessential psychoanalytic document ... [It] confronts the immense power and necessary strangeness of the transference – that form of love, or erotic bond, that fuels the healing process. The 'potion' – an artificial yet powerfully real attachment – is the agent of a temporary induced blindness that gives access to a region otherwise inaccessible.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Freud, 'Observations on transference-love', p. 168.

¹³⁸ Freud, 'Observations on transference-love', p. 168.

¹³⁹ Freud, 'Observations on transference-love', p. 169.

¹⁴⁰ Pinsky 'The potion', pp. 455-74.

¹⁴¹ Pinsky, 'The potion', p. 455.

Pinsky describes psychoanalysis as ‘an extraordinary arrangement where two people talk in a way that ... has no parallel’ in other relationships.¹⁴² She refers to a substantial quotation from Stephen Greenblatt about the love-juice as an emblem of the speed with which desire can be detached from one object and attached to another.¹⁴³ She comments that the psychoanalytic process

similarly devises that love juice, channels it, and distributes it for a special use.

The fairies’ potion is in us all, with its insistent, dizzying, fluent power. ... In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* do the characters *truly* love each other? Or is it the potion?’¹⁴⁴

That is a very important question for the psychoanalytic critic who wishes to think about the nature of love in the play. Is the love that Lysander and Demetrius feel towards Helena an illusion?

Idealisation and illusion

It is very surprising that no psychoanalytic critic of the play has picked up this issue in any consistent way, especially given Freud’s paper on transference-love, as well as psychoanalytic discussions of the phenomena of idealisation and illusion. There are a few hints in the literature that are worth noting, and in this part of the chapter I collate various brief allusions to the play, where they have been used to illustrate forms of love. The majority of references to this type of love in the *Dream* appear in the context of discussion of psychoanalytic theory, rather than as critical arguments about the play.

¹⁴² Pinsky, ‘The potion’, p. 455.

¹⁴³ Stephen Greenblatt, ‘Commentary on *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*’, in S. Greenblatt, ed. *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 1997), p. 810.

¹⁴⁴ Pinsky, ‘The potion’, p. 461.

These are ‘comments’ rather than ‘criticism’. Nevertheless an argument for the illusory nature of the love-juice-induced love in the *Dream* can be supported in a number of references.

Collating these comments suggests a perspective on the occurrence of idealisation and illusion, describing the male lovers’ experiences of love when under the spell of the love-juice. In addition it is worth noting the most quoted lines from the *Dream* in all psychoanalytic papers (including those not have nothing to do with the play) are from Theseus’s speech in Act 5, where he links ‘the lunatic, the lover and the poet’ as ‘of imagination all compact’, and where lovers are seen as having ‘seething brains’, ‘shaping fantasies’, beyond the comprehension of ‘cool reason’ (THESEUS, 5.1.4-8).¹⁴⁵ In a more general sense psychoanalysis confirms the connection that Theseus makes.

An early reference in psychoanalytic literature to falling in love in the *Dream* is in 1951 by the German-born naturalised British psychoanalyst Eva Rosenfeld who links falling in love to a child-like state:

What a picture he [Shakespeare] paints of this pining and searching, losing and finding, which is typical for the immature child's mind and to which all men return when they are in love! ... [W]hat we understand when we read it is that to be in love makes man a child again ... [love] silences the voice of the super-ego and suspends temporarily the primacy of the intellect.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ The couplet ‘The lunatic, the lover and the poet / Are of imagination all compact’ is cited in 20 papers, with an additional 5 citations of the first line alone; and ‘fine frenzy’ is cited in 19 papers.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁶ Rosenfeld, ‘The Pan-headed Moses – a parallel’, p. 92. This is not the earliest reference to falling in love and the *Dream*. When Hitler came to power Freud told Theodor Reik how this reminded him of the *Dream* when Titania fell in love with an ass. ‘But that a whole country should, that one could not expect!’ (Paul Roazen, ‘Two interviews with Reik’, *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 23 (2006), p. pp. 676-83).

Had Rosenfeld been looking for a supportive quotation from the play she might have quoted Helena's 'Love is said to be a child' (1.1.238).

Reference in psychoanalysis to illusory thinking in the *Dream* occurs more commonly in the last quarter of the twentieth century, in line with post-modern scepticism about objective truth.¹⁴⁷ An American psychoanalyst, Alan Rothenberg (1977), examines Shakespeare's metaphors in his plays and poetry as illustrating infantile fantasies. In an article where his focus is on metaphors of darkness, or fear of the light (photophobia), some of his examples are taken from the *Dream*.¹⁴⁸ One comment appears particularly relevant, occurring in a footnote referring to Helena. Rothenberg introduces an interesting phrase, which in its original context was cited by Karl Abraham, an early colleague of Freud's: that in their thinking the libido of philosophers 'is no longer directed to that which one *must not see* but to that which one *cannot see*'.¹⁴⁹ In psychoanalytic terms this refers to looking into abstractions as a reaction against the wish to look at what is forbidden. In the footnote Rothenberg suggests that 'throughout *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Shakespeare plays on variations of the theme that one may turn from loving what one *must not see* to what one *cannot see*'.¹⁵⁰ He gives two examples of what he means: that through the application of the love-juice Titania loves what she cannot see, that Bottom is an ass; and that Lysander, forbidden by 'ducal decree', 'turns his erotic gaze' from Hermia whom he must not see towards Helena whom he cannot see 'in his sleep'. These are puzzling examples since Titania does see

¹⁴⁷ This was not new, since Freud had written persuasively about illusion, applied not just to religion, but also to philosophy. He almost acknowledged that it could be true of his own discipline ('The Future of an Illusion', 1927, *Standard Edition*, Volume XXI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 1-56). See my own *Illusion: a Psychodynamic Interpretation of Thinking and Belief* (London, Whurr Publications, 2000).

¹⁴⁸ Rothenberg, 'Infantile fantasies in Shakespearian metaphor', pp. 173-202.

¹⁴⁹ Rothenberg, 'Infantile fantasies', p. 182. The emphasis is partly in Abraham's quotation, although Rothenberg also italicises the two words 'see'.

¹⁵⁰ Rothenberg, 'Infantile fantasies', p. 198.

the ass (‘What visions I have seen / Methought I was enamour’d of an ass’, TITANIA, 4.1.75-6), and Lysander does see Helena even if in a narcotic state. Nevertheless the idea of a substitute love for a love that is not allowed is interesting, and is a form of transference-love: Titania turns to Bottom as a substitute for the boy whom Oberon ‘forbids’ her to dote upon; Lysander is forced on Helena when the super-ego figures of Theseus and Egeus forbid him to see Hermia. If this is what Rothenberg means, it confirms my own interpretation that the male lovers and Titania have to fall desperately in and out of love with an alternative object in order to enter a more normal (or in the case of the men a more mature) love of the original object.

Heuscher (1989) believes that Shakespeare makes a clear distinction ‘between falling *in love*, *love at first sight* or *love as projection*, on the one hand, and *genuine loving of a real person*, on the other hand’.¹⁵¹ He does not spell out where those distinctions can be seen.

Ethel Spector Person (1989), an American psychoanalyst whose work on love relations is highly respected, believes that ‘the lover *thinks* his love is aroused solely by the virtues of the loved one’, whereas ‘his love is an illusion, that it is he who has endowed the beloved with so much value’. She cites Theseus’s ‘The lunatic, the lover, and the poet / Are of imagination all compact’ (5.1.7-8) as evidence that ‘Shakespeare, for one, saw through the illusion with great lucidity’.¹⁵²

In a 1994 paper on ‘Love, Desire and Infatuation’, a British Jungian analyst, Warren Colman, sees passionate love as an attempt to recreate the symbiotic duo of mother and

¹⁵¹ Heuscher, ‘Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch’, p. 322 (Heuscher’s emphasis).

¹⁵² Person, *Love and Fateful Encounters*, p. 42.

child. He sees falling in love in the *Dream* variously as an ‘intense illusion’, ‘madness’, ‘an extraordinary hallucination’, ‘a temporary psychosis’ where ‘even the most unsuitable objects can be the recipients of the most intense and passionate love’.¹⁵³ The wood is a place for initiatory trials on the path towards adulthood: and love is ‘an experience of *initiation*, a developmental event in its own right that marks the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Such initiation requires the capacity to bear the pain of love as well as its pleasures’.¹⁵⁴ Lysander’s and Demetrius’s desire for Helena and Titania’s passionate love for Bottom are an illusion: ‘Shakespeare shows us that the source of these potent illusions [of passionate love] lies not in the body but in the imagination and it is this that links it with poetry and with madness’.¹⁵⁵ We might add, ‘not with the eyes but with the mind’ (HELENA, 1.1.234).

Prefacing a paper on passionate love (written entirely in verse) with Theseus’s speech, Richard Chessick (1999), a psychiatrist and fellow of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis, also describes passionate love as ‘a private madness; and ‘falling in love as the ego’s act of imagination’ and ‘a temporary deal’.¹⁵⁶

A delusion, as in psychosis, is difficult to shift. Illusion is a different concept, open to change, although often only with the passage of time. It is frequently a transitional state, as the wood in the *Dream* is a place where transition (Marjorie Garber’s ‘transformation’) can occur. There is, however, in the writing of some British psychoanalysts a reading of illusion that sees it not only as a valuable transitional state,

¹⁵³ Colman, ‘Love, desire and infatuation’, pp. 508-9.

¹⁵⁴ Colman, ‘Love, desire and infatuation’, p. 497.

¹⁵⁵ Colman, ‘Love, desire and infatuation’, p. 508.

¹⁵⁶ Chessick, ‘Passionate love’, p. 516.

but as one which unites different ways of seeing. A British psychotherapist, John F. Turner, extensively considers the use of the term illusion in texts from Renaissance England to the twentieth century, making clear the difference between the use of the word in Elizabethan England, and in the twentieth century. Referring to the *Dream*, Turner understands Puck to be practising ‘illusion upon Helena ... in the language of dream rather than of illusion’.¹⁵⁷

Turner’s actual objective is to discuss two British psychoanalysts, Marion Milner and Donald Winnicott, both of whom use a more modern concept of illusion. Writing about Milner valuing two ways of seeing, Turner’s discussion supports Hippolyta’s perceptive comments (5.1.23-7) that the lovers have been subject to more than fantasy:

[There is a struggle between] objective seeing, necessary to perceive the otherness of the created world in all its difference from the self, and a kind of poetic, or oceanic seeing, necessary to suffuse the otherness of the outside world with the sense of self. Both kinds of seeing, [Milner] believed, belonged to human beings, and both were necessary. Objective seeing helped to establish our sense of separateness as human beings, while poetic seeing reaffirmed powerful infantile experiences of fusion ... Such seeing might be recovered in later life in love, in art, in dream, in the analytic hour, in what she called ‘moments of illusion’ ... They were ‘a recurrently necessary phase in the continued growth of the sense of twoness’.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Turner, ‘A brief history of illusion’, p. 1066.

¹⁵⁸ Turner, ‘A brief history of illusion’, p. 1070. The citation from Milner is in her 1952 essay ‘The role of illusion in symbol formation’, in M. Klein, P. Heimann, S. Isaacs, and J. Riviere eds *New Directions in Psycho-Analysis* (London: Tavistock,), pp.100-101.

Given the frequent references to sight and the eyes in relation to love in the play, Turner's summary is valuable, since it suggests that Shakespeare is able to show how love consists of many different elements, the objective and the subjective, the poetic and the mundane, otherness and fusion, all of which are in some sense illusory.

It is of course not the retina in the lover's eye that sees the one whom the lover perceives; imagination is a strong element in falling in love. I find support for the role of imagination in love in a 2004 paper, the title of which quotes from the *Dream*: "'Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind": the death and rebirth of imagination'.¹⁵⁹ The author, a British psychoanalytic psychotherapist, James V. Fisher, argues that 'imagination [is] at work in all perception, in our seeing, hearing, feeling and so on', suggesting that Theseus's speech is one of the best known 'pictures' of its role.¹⁶⁰ Fisher notes that the contemporary phrase 'I fancy you' links imagination and fancy in Shakespeare's time; and

'falling-in-love' is, one might say, a seizure of the imagination, of which Oberon's love-juice is a delightful picture ... Shakespeare is pointing out that what we see and hear and feel is shaped and formed and given a local habitation by the mind's conscious and unconscious phantasy.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ James V. Fisher, "'Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind": the Death and Rebirth of Imagination', *Journal of the British Association of Psychotherapists*, 42.2 (2004), pp. 101-15.

¹⁶⁰ This journal is not online for any issue earlier than 2005, and is only available to members; but the author kindly sent me a copy of his paper electronically. This makes it difficult to give precise page numbers. The quotations that follow are from Fisher's paper.

¹⁶¹ A similar view of the place of imagination is seen in Robert Dent's 'Imagination in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*', where he highlights the word 'dotage' giving several examples and using phrases such as 'the monomaniacal pursuit of an unrequited love' and 'the ridiculous bestowal of affection upon an obviously unworthy object'. He comments that in the middle of the play 'dotage grows more rampant, so too does imagination' (p. 117).

Fisher observes that the imagination is powerful in dreaming, a power which is demonstrated in its ongoing effect when the lovers awake. '*A Midsummer Night's Dream* not only helps us notice the role of imagination, it also raises for us inescapable questions about symbolism, illusion and reality'.

While the play shows us illusions, it is itself an illusion. Jonathan Bate says that the play invites us 'to believe and not believe'.¹⁶² Puck's epilogue suggests that there was enchantment for the audience as well as reality, and, as Frosch observes, that there is 'ongoing tension between external reality and internal subjectivity [that] reminds us that the transitional experience will be there for us in the future'.¹⁶³

That the play itself stages an illusion brings us full circle back to transference-love in the psychoanalytic situation. Is the stage like the consulting-room? Ellen Pinsky wonders whether the lovers really love one another, just as the question has been asked whether the patient really loves the analyst. Commenting on the psychoanalytic situation she suggests that there is self-deception in the process, even using the word 'untruthfulness' to describe what is at its heart. Yet she (and Freud) argue that such a deception serves the purpose of healing, as the patient works through their fantasy love. As Pinsky says:

the enterprise is full of paradoxes and contradictions: the situation is real, it's unreal; it's staged, it's real life; it's personal, it's impersonal; it's personal, it's theoretical; it's an artifice, it's not artificial; it starts with 'no', it stirs up 'yes'; it

¹⁶² Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 135.

¹⁶³ Frosch, 'The missing child', p. 499.

provides safeties, these safeties heat things up; it frustrates, it relaxes; it forbids, it permits; if it succeeds, it disappoints.¹⁶⁴

‘Staged’ suggests to me that the psychoanalytic situation, which has a certain ‘make-believe’ quality to it, is like the theatre. Indeed, I have noted above that Freud used the metaphor of the theatre to describe a patient falling in love with the analyst, which is like someone raising the cry of ‘fire’ in the middle of a theatrical performance. It breaks into the analysis.¹⁶⁵ Perhaps this can be expressed equally well in the mirror image, that theatre is like psychoanalysis. It creates an illusion; it is real (inasmuch as the actors are real and they may be portraying real emotions, and real issues), and yet it is not real. It is staged, but it is about real life.

Or relating this to the play in question, I would prefer to put it another way: that the psychoanalytic process is like the *Dream*.¹⁶⁶ It starts with reality situations: a recent battle and a forthcoming marriage; pressure on a young woman to marry her father’s choice; rivalry between the young men for her love; and the jilting of a second young woman. The action moves to a wood, which is a world of fantasy, a world of madness, but a fantasy that is transitional and may enable transformation. The fairy-world is like the presence of transference-love in psychoanalysis, an illusion, a token reality, where there is idealisation and its opposite in psychoanalytic terms, denigration leading to narcissistic wounds. It is a world where all the lovers, whether or not anointed by the love-juice, are subjected to unreal experiences, yet experiences that echo real life. The

¹⁶⁴ Pinsky, ‘The potion’, p. 465.

¹⁶⁵ ‘There is a complete change of scene; it is as though some piece of make-believe had been stopped by the sudden irruption of reality – as when, for instance, a cry of fire is raised during a theatrical performance’ (Sigmund Freud, ‘Observations on Transference-love’, p. 162).

¹⁶⁶ Pinsky herself suggests a parallel between the psychoanalytic process and a stage play (‘The potion’ p. 460).

fairy-world, like the psychoanalytic process, puts all the lovers, human and fairy, in situations where they struggle with intense emotions of loving and hating, until they are brought to the hope of more stable and mature ways of relating.

An alternative to the Oedipus complex

What is remarkable about psychoanalytic interpretations of the *Dream* is not only that narcissism, idealisation and illusion have largely been ignored in readings of the play, but that there has been no reference in any of them to the myth of Cupid and Psyche. In a recent book Carol Gilligan (2004) proposes that our present age is served better by that myth than by the Oedipus myth and its associated complex.¹⁶⁷

This Greek myth, which we know through the account of it in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*, is for some literary critics an important source or influence upon Shakespeare in his writing of the *Dream*. Harold Brooks (1979) is definite in his assertion that Shakespeare must have drawn upon Apuleius for his idea of Bottom being turned into an ass; and James McPeck (1972) shows how many allusions there are to the Cupid and Psyche story in the play.¹⁶⁸ It is not as if the myth was insignificant to psychoanalysis. One of the earliest psychoanalytic journals was titled *Psyche and Eros*, although it soon morphed into *Imago*. I find 18 references in psychoanalytic journals to the myth of Eros and Psyche, and 39 to it as Cupid and Psyche – but most are theoretical

¹⁶⁷ Gilligan, *The Birth of Pleasure*.

¹⁶⁸ Brooks, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. lix: 'Shakespeare could scarcely have been ignorant of the most famous of all stories ... the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius'; McPeck, 'The Psyche myth and A Midsummer Night's Dream', pp. 69-79.

papers about the relationship between the psychoanalytic concepts of Eros and Psyche, sometimes adding Thanatos to the mix.¹⁶⁹

A summary of the myth shows how relevant it is to the play. (I use the Greek and Roman names as most references to the myth are to the Roman Cupid and Greek Psyche.) A royal couple has three daughters, of whom Psyche is the most beautiful, so beautiful that she is worshipped above Venus. While her sisters marry, Psyche is left alone in her room and her concerned parents consult the oracle, who tells them Psyche will marry a monster. Psyche is then left by her father on a mountain to await this monster husband, but she is carried by the west wind to a field of flowers and a castle full of treasure. Venus orders her son Cupid to punish Psyche by making her fall in love with the ugliest creature there is. He comes to her at night telling her she must not attempt to see what he looks like. About to carry out the task Cupid glimpses Psyche, and seeing how beautiful she is, accidentally pricks himself with his own arrow and falls in love with her instantly. Her sisters visit her, and jealous of her new lifestyle they convince Psyche she must find out what this creature looks like. That night she waits until her husband is asleep and then lights an oil lamp; finding that her husband is actually Cupid she is so distracted that, falling love with him at first sight, she drops oil from her lamp on to him, waking him. He flees telling Psyche she will never see him again, but she goes in search of him; and after a series of trials set her by Venus, one of which causes her to fall into a deep sleep, Cupid, now recovered from his burn, wakes her from the sleep into which she has fallen. He pleads for her to Zeus, who makes

¹⁶⁹ Williams and Waddell, whose chapter in *The Chamber of Maiden Thought* on the *Dream* I have referred to elsewhere, do write about the Psyche story, but in a different chapter, on Keats's 'Ode to Psyche' (pp. 109-25).

Psyche immortal and commands Venus to accept Psyche. Cupid and Psyche together have a daughter, Voluptas or Pleasure.

Parallels in the *Dream* are evident. As McPeck observes, the devoted and patient Psyche is an image of Hermia and Helena, both of whom remain true to their first love.¹⁷⁰

Additionally, I observe that in one version Psyche is left on a mountain-top facing death, as the infant Oedipus is left to die on Mount Cithaeron. Similarly, Hermia is to face death or be banished to a solitary life. Psyche's search for Cupid is echoed in Helena's dogged pursuit of Demetrius.¹⁷¹ Psyche is transported to a field of flowers, like Titania's bower; and Titania is made literally to fall in love with a beast. McPeck points out the parallel between Venus and Oberon, each seeking vengeance and each sending off Cupid or Puck respectively on their errands of mischief.¹⁷² Psyche's deep sleep and waking to Cupid's rescue of her seems to find a parallel in Titania and the four lovers falling into such a sleep and being woken respectively by Oberon and Theseus. Love at first sight is present both in Cupid pricking himself with an arrow when he sees Psyche, and Psyche falling love with him when she sees him for the first time. All this is in addition to the more obvious parallel of Titania falling in love with an ass, just as Psyche believes that her lover is a monster.¹⁷³ Cupid asks his father Jupiter to intervene, and Jupiter instructs Venus to let the couple be. This is also the case when the patriarchal figure of Theseus tells Egeus that he 'will overbear your will' (4.1.178), accepting

¹⁷⁰ McPeck, 'The Psyche myth', p. 70.

¹⁷¹ In one version of the story, when Cupid is burnt by oil from Psyche's lamp and flies off, Psyche holds on to his ankle and is dragged along by him, unable or unwilling to let go. Is there a parallel again with Oedipus, who as a baby was pinned by his ankle to the ground when left to die on Mount Cithaeron? Achilles also comes to mind.

¹⁷² McPeck, 'The Psyche myth', p. 73. Harold Brooks (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. lx) also refers to the Psyche and Cupid story, where Venus plans revenge on Psyche by having her fall in love with a vile creature and compares this to Oberon's imperative: 'Wake when some vile thing is near' (2.2.40).

¹⁷³ McPeck draws attention to a number of other textual allusions between the play and the translation of Apuleius that Shakespeare probably knew, which are not relevant to my argument.

Lysander's and Demetrius's wishes instead. The play ends with the promise of children, and the myth ends with Cupid and Psyche having the child named Pleasure.

If this account of the myth and the parallels with the play are now considered in the light of psychoanalytic comments on the myth, the myth can be seen to have even greater relevance for psychoanalytic criticism. I have shown how the phenomenon of transference-love throws light upon the effect of the love juice on Titania, Lysander and Demetrius. Martin Bergmann (1982), for example, opens an article on platonic love, transference-love and love in real life with reference to the myth, although the lesson he takes from it is 'as a cautionary tale, warning us that love will vanish if, like Psyche, driven by curiosity, we dare gaze upon its face'.¹⁷⁴ In the course of his article Bergmann states that 'transference love loosens the incestuous tie and prepares the way for a future love freed from the need to repeat oedipal triangulations'.¹⁷⁵ I have observed too that the love-juice induces a state of being in love which, like transference-love, needs to be worked through in order to reach a more balanced loving relationship. This also seems to appear in the Cupid and Psyche myth. Both Cupid and Psyche fall in love at first sight, but Cupid flees and only returns to Psyche when the burn on his ankle is healed; and Psyche has to undergo a number of trials before she achieves what her initial love at first sight did not yield, a permanent relationship with her husband Cupid.

The Psyche and Cupid myth, as written down by Apuleius in North Africa in the second century C.E., reflects a history of women's resistance to patriarchy. This is the view of Carol Gilligan, who cites a study that suggests that: 'The trio who bring about this transformation are a young woman, her lover, and his mother – an alternative to the

¹⁷⁴ Bergmann, 'Platonic love, transference love', p. 87.

¹⁷⁵ Bergmann, 'Platonic love, transference love', p. 107.

oedipal triangle. The myth was written or recorded at a time when the hegemony of patriarchy was becoming unsettled'.¹⁷⁶ This appears to reflect the women's challenges to patriarchy in the play.

My own questioning of interpretations of the *Dream* that are based solely on the Oedipus complex is also found in Carol Gilligan's *The Birth of Pleasure*, where she challenges the continuing prevalence in the late twentieth century of the Oedipus myth in psychoanalytic ideas about love:

For over a hundred years, one of the most powerful and influential paradigms for understanding human nature and human experience has been Freud's interpretation of the Oedipus tragedy, a doom-laden story about patriarchy and forbidden love.¹⁷⁷

Gilligan is a psychologist who initially researched women's ethical thinking, and proposed that women speak in a different voice to men. Psychoanalysis features significantly in her writing, and she is in no way anti-Freud. She does not dispute that oedipal interpretations are relevant and have value, but they apply to a patriarchal society. They need not have the force they still have in a world where women have found a voice, and where relationships between men and men, and men and women are changing. Hermia and Helena are exemplars of Gilligan's women who in much of the play find their true voice: Hermia is determined to oppose her father at all costs; and Helena is determined not to give up on Demetrius, almost forcing him to love her. They achieve what they want, even if we hear little of their voice from that point onwards.

¹⁷⁶ Carol Gilligan, 'Recovering Psyche: reflections on life-history and history', *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 32 (2004), p. 144. Gilligan's reference is to a paper presented by Eva Canterella at a conference that followed the publication of Gilligan's book, *The Birth of Pleasure*.

¹⁷⁷ Gilligan, *Birth of Pleasure*, pp. 4-5.

Gilligan proposes a different paradigm for the present western world, an alternative myth to that of Oedipus, that of Psyche and Cupid, observing that in the early days of psychoanalysis Psyche also found a voice. Freud makes no reference in his writing to the myth, but he too gave women a voice, however much in some of his writing he appears patronising towards them. Gilligan notes that, like the Oedipus story, the Psyche and Cupid myth has elements such as ‘the silent or angry mother, envy among women, the son’s dilemma, the law of the father’, ‘but it also ‘shows the radical nature of love between a man and a women’.¹⁷⁸

Gilligan only refers to the *Dream* once, when she mentions the confusion of the lovers in the wood. But she relates the Psyche and Cupid story to many literary works, including *Twelfth Night*. There is a very good reason why its possible relevance to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* should not be neglected. What Gilligan proposes is a myth for our own age, one where there are greater challenges to patriarchy.

Nevertheless, a degree of caution is necessary in applying her argument to the play, even if it does contain many elements that are so similar to the Cupid and Psyche myth. The Oedipus myth may have outworn its relevance for contemporary loving relations, and may need to be challenged for its ongoing influence in psychoanalysis, but its patriarchal context is still relevant for the time when the *Dream* was first written and staged.

Gilligan does not appear to dispute that in earlier times, when patriarchy was clearly the governing principle in relationships between men and between men and women, the Oedipus myth was an appropriate way of understanding relationships. It is that age in

¹⁷⁸ Gilligan, *The Birth of Pleasure*, p. 33.

which Shakespeare was writing, and for that reason there is still some mileage in the Oedipus myth, even if Shakespeare, steeped as he is in classical mythology, nowhere refers to Oedipus.¹⁷⁹ Psyche as a mythical reference is of course also absent, at least explicitly. And if Cupid is rarely referred to, he clearly features in Oberon's speech on the love-juice flower (2.1.157 and 165). The arguments for Shakespeare's knowledge of the story of Cupid and Psyche and for allusions to it in the *Dream* are strong, and psychoanalytic criticism has missed the opportunity to explore the Cupid and Psyche myth and its particular resonance with the love themes in the play.

Moreover, the idea that the psyche was given a voice by Freud is seen in the play itself, inasmuch as the young lovers are given their voice: a voice to challenge parental injunctions, as well as in the wood a voice to speak their fervent feelings to each other, their love and their hate. The wood is not just a place where the turbulence of the mind is experienced, but where there is an honest and open dialogue between the men, between the women and between the sexes – the wood becomes a place where thoughts and feelings that might otherwise be suppressed or repressed are allowed expression. In this way the Cupid and Psyche motifs within the play echo Goldstein's hypothesis of an identity crisis in the young lovers. They have to confront themselves and each other as they have never done quite so honestly before.

¹⁷⁹ While it is unlikely that Shakespeare read Sophocles, since Latin literature was more important to Elizabethan writers than Greek literature, Alexander Neville had produced an inaccurate translation of Seneca's *Oedipus* in 1563 – reprinted in a collection of essays by the publisher Marsh in 1581. John Kerrigan suggests that 'Neville is almost as interested as post-Freudian readers in Oedipus' "incestuous loathsome lust" which begs the question of whether the story might also have appealed to Shakespeare – yet there is no evidence in his plays that it did (*On Shakespeare and Early Modern Literature: Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 232).

Conclusion

I argue in this chapter that psychoanalytic criticism, in its single-minded attention to the Oedipus complex when writing about the love themes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, has failed to develop other more relevant interpretations of the play from the ideas about love both in Freud and in later psychoanalytic literature. Jungian analysis is generally much more interested in the application of myths to the understanding of the personal and the collective psyche, but Freudian psychoanalysis has tended to focus on two – Oedipus and Narcissus. The latter myth supports Freud's concept of narcissism in the pre-oedipal period, but that, like Cupid and Psyche, is another neglected feature of psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream*.

Perhaps the difficulty for psychoanalysis, as indeed it is for many other disciplines, is that defining mature or true love is impossible. Bergmann writes that 'not without irony [Freud] claimed that when psychoanalysis touches the subject of love its touch must be clumsy by comparison with that of the poets'.¹⁸⁰ Love takes many forms, and psychoanalysis, with a few exceptions, tends to focus on those people and relationships where love has led to what Freud describes as 'disturbing associations'.

Any psychoanalytic discussion of the subject of love needs this acknowledgement of the value of the poet, the novelist and the dramatist. The highly respected and influential American psychoanalyst Otto Kernberg

¹⁸⁰ Bergmann, 'Freud's three theories of love', p. 652. Bergmann does not reference this claim, and while I do not doubt Bergmann's knowledge of the subject, I cannot find the passages to which Bergmann refers.

acknowledges in his psychoanalytic study of love relations that ‘Poets and philosophers have undoubtedly described the prerequisites for and components of mature love better than a psychoanalytic dissection could achieve’.¹⁸¹ This is echoed by another American psychoanalyst, Jody Davies (2006), who evocatively describes falling in love as ‘We drip, we yearn, we are bewitched – romantic passion [is] ecstatic, creative, transformative’.¹⁸² She describes how, when writing about a topic, she usually combs psychoanalytic literature for insights; but ‘when it comes to understanding on the deepest level the intricacies, nuances and textures of romance, erotic attachment, and desire’, she turns ‘not to the psychoanalysts, but to the true experts in this matter ... to the great poets’.¹⁸³ She cites five such poets, three from classical Greece, Shakespeare and the line ‘The lunatic, the lover and the poet’, and Dryden.¹⁸⁴

The psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary critics in this chapter have clearly recognised how the play portrays ‘the intricacies, nuances and textures of romance, erotic attachment, and desire’, and have sought to show how their theories relate to the different situations enacted on the stage. While psychoanalytic critics provide an interesting gloss on the play’s portrayal of love relations in the play, what must also be considered is whether it is the play that provides as much to the psychoanalytic critics in their descriptions of love and loving as their own theories do to the play. Such a question extends to other ways psychoanalytic critics examine the play, and is discussed in my ‘Conclusion’.

¹⁸¹ Kernberg, *Love Relations*, p. 32.

¹⁸² J. M. Davies, ‘The times we sizzle, and the times we sigh: the multiple erotics of arousal, anticipation, and release’, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 16 (2006), pp. 665-86.

¹⁸³ Davies, ‘The times we sizzle, and the times we sigh’, p. 666.

¹⁸⁴ Davies, ‘The times we sizzle, and the times we sigh’, pp. 666-7.

Conclusion

I conclude by answering as far as possible the three questions that are set out in the Introduction and have guided my reading of psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary criticism of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

What have psychoanalytic critics, as well as psychoanalytic-literary critics, contributed to the interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

I have distinguished throughout between the contributions of psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary critics of the *Dream*. Starting with psychoanalytic critics, they have produced a substantial corpus of writing on the play, some of it of great originality and insight.

It is difficult not to be fascinated by the lengths to which Weston Gui goes in manipulating the text in pursuit of his focus on Bottom's dream, with his core interpretation of sibling rivalry, as I have described in Chapter 1. Although he treats the text somewhat wildly, as if it is all related to Bottom's supposed dream, he nonetheless provides a fascinating psychological portrait of Bottom, one of the most psychologically interesting characters in the play. Gui boldly goes from there to where no other critic of the play would think to tread, to a psychological profile of Shakespeare's own childhood jealousy when his brother was born and nursed by their mother. This, he argues, is the driving force for interpretation of Bottom's dream and the play. But ignore the final section of his paper, and what he seeks is a coherent motif of sibling rivalry, related to the oedipal stage and to oral fantasies. There is of course much that is pure speculation

resulting in frequent distortions of the text to justify a particular classical psychoanalytic point of view. It is psychoanalytic interpretation taken to an extreme, unlike most of Freud's own critical work, but similar to the early followers of Freud, who often treated his ideas as dogma. In addition to being a highly original interpretation of the *Dream*, Gui's paper is distinctive both in its time and in comparison with later psychoanalytic criticism.

Alexander Grinstein's paper, examined in Chapter 2, is by contrast short and makes only a brief allusion to the *Dream*; but he poses a question and proposes an answer that I suggest makes a particular contribution to criticism of the play within the play, *Pyramus and Thisbe*. Like a number of literary critics he attaches significance to it over and above its providing light relief and burlesque as the play draws to its conclusion. He foregrounds it as an example of the way in which such a nested play not only recapitulates previous scenes with the lovers in the wood, but (distinctively) points forward as well, beyond the conclusion of the play, to the consequences that might come from the union between Theseus and Hippolyta. Reference to their progeny is not unfamiliar in literary criticism (Frosch, for example, makes a similar observation about their child) but it is not so clearly linked to the play within the play. Grinstein's argument is extended by Leon Balter, also discussed in Chapter 2, who says a little more about the play, and locates the idea of the containing object and the nested object in other art forms. In both cases these authors show that psychoanalytic criticism need not be confined to the characters in a fictional work, since they look at the construction of the play itself.

Melvin Goldstein's reading of the *Dream*, discussed in Chapter 3, looks both at character and at the function of comedy. Goldstein's development of the idea of an identity crisis demonstrates a plausible explanation-cum-description of the adolescent men in the play, which is extended to consider identity crises in other characters. He argues his interpretation of these characters through a close reading of the language they use. This strong analysis of the text is quite different from Gui's way of interpreting it. Goldstein accumulates considerable evidence that leads to plausible psychological portraits. I have criticised these as rather extreme diagnoses, even if consistent with psychiatric psychopathology. The more developmentally normal identity crisis that is his main argument is a more convincing explanation. But this does not detract from his careful attention to the way individual use of language points to personal characteristics. The second feature of his paper is his argument about the function of comedy in disguising terror and nightmare. Here Goldstein reinforces those literary critics who have focused on the dark side of the play, but he adds a psychological factor to his discussion, which allows the play to function as a comedy while at the same time having a more sinister undercurrent.

Unlike the previous three chapters, Chapter 4 on the psychology of love has no single substantial contributor from whose ideas I could go on to examine shorter contributions. Aside from a large number of oedipal interpretations, a number of much briefer glosses on the play provide some tantalising but potentially valuable possibilities for psychoanalytic criticism, also relevant to literary criticism. Ellen Pinsky's paper in Chapter 4 on 'The potion' deserves particular mention, with its clear reference to the love-juice in the play. She neatly harmonises a comment by a major literary critic, Stephen Greenblatt, with a much earlier observation on transference love by Freud. A

number of papers by British psychoanalytic psychotherapists that I discuss in the same chapter also support, from a psychological position, the interest that literary criticism has shown in imagination and illusion in the *Dream*. Carol Gilligan's foregrounding of the Psyche and Eros myth in preference to the Oedipus myth may include only the briefest reference to the *Dream*, but similarly suggests other avenues for further psychoanalytic criticism of it.

Notable contributions by psychoanalytic-literary critics are the interpretations of Hermia's dream by Mervyn Faber and Norman Holland, discussed in Chapter 1. They focus on the only unambiguous reference to an actual dream in the play. Unlike Gui they do not proceed from an invented day-residue in order to interpret the dream (Gui presupposes an oedipal issue for Bottom in the coming court wedding). They use instead the text with the immediate incident of Lysander's wish to sleep close to Hermia. Furthermore, staying true to Freudian dream-interpretation, their explanation of Hermia's dream is set within the play as a whole. It is the play that must decide how the dream might be understood. Not surprisingly, this accords with a literary critical approach to understanding a portion of text as related to the whole. Their contributions are of course better known to literary criticism, as indeed are James Calderwood's Freudian and Lacanian interpretations of the play.

The contributions by two psychoanalytic-literary critics, Allen Dunn and Thomas Frosch, contrast greatly with the psychoanalytic critics whose focus on oedipal issues is perhaps to be expected, but is nonetheless disappointing, since there is little new in such a well-worn trope. I have observed that if adult rivalries are a reworking of former oedipal situations, the play provides no evidence of any earlier underlying childhood

experiences. Dunn and Frosch, however, each taking the Indian boy as a starting point, brilliantly see the movement of the whole play as a type of regression to childhood, re-working childish behaviours and thinking, and returning from childhood to more maturity. They draw considerably on psychoanalytic ideas, and demonstrate one way in which the play appeals to the child in the adult. This is something, surprisingly, that psychoanalytic critics do not attempt, despite the aesthetic and psychological appeal of this play being a relevant question for their consideration.

A particular difference between the psychoanalytic critics and the psychoanalytic-literary critics is that few of the psychoanalytic critics refer to literary criticism of the play. Ironically, given my scepticism about many of his interpretations, Gui does make some reference to Spurgeon, while Goldstein is almost unique among psychoanalytic critics in demonstrating a wide reading of both literary and psychoanalytic sources in his extensive footnotes. There is little attention in any psychoanalytic criticism (except Gui's speculation about the occasion for which it is written) to the early modern context of the play. This is curious, given that in clinical practice an analyst would seek to understand the history and context of an individual patient's experience in order to understand what he or she currently presents. Nor do any of the psychoanalytic critics show evidence of awareness of features of literary criticism that would have been relevant at the times those critics are writing: New Criticism, New Historicism, or feminist, post-colonial, and queer theory.

How have shifts in psychoanalytic theory over time influenced changes in psychoanalytic interpretations of the *Dream*?

Several literary critics have identified distinct phases in psychoanalytic criticism of literature. One of the first to do this was Norman Holland in his paper on ‘Hermia’s dream’. He employs her dream to illustrate what he identifies as three distinct phases of psychoanalytic interpretation of literary texts.¹ The first is one-for-one translation of symbols (e.g. penis=snake), or the emphasis on unconscious meanings; the second is a focus on the ego (e.g. the conflicts in Hermia’s mind); and the third on the impact of the text on the reader. These phases are identified with i. a psychology based on drives, ii. a psychology of the ego, iii. object relations psychology. Although Holland does not quite equate them as running parallel, he also identifies three phases of literary criticism, ‘historical, New Criticism, and postmodern’.²

However, reviewing the type of psychoanalytic interpretations made by the psychoanalytic critics, there is very little evidence of clinicians’ interpretations of the *Dream* following these phases. Neither does the psychoanalytic criticism discussed in this thesis actually reflect changes in psychoanalysis. Holland’s paper on Hermia’s dream was written before the 1970s developments of psychoanalytic theory in America, which brought a greater emphasis on narcissism and the formation of the self. But Holland does refer to Erik Erikson, an important post-Freudian and a Danish émigré who was one of several who recognised the relevance of different cultures in child development. However, Erikson is never mentioned in any of the psychoanalytic

¹ Other versions of these phases are proposed by Elizabeth Wright (*Psychoanalytic Criticism: a Reappraisal*), Philip Armstrong (*Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis*) and Carolyn Brown (*Shakespeare and Psychoanalytic Theory*).

² Norman Holland, ‘Psychoanalysis and literature – past and present’, p. 9. Kay Souter does suggest that psychoanalysis and literary criticism have developed roughly in parallel through the twentieth century (‘Products of the imagination’, p. 347).

criticism of the *Dream*, even by Goldstein who appears to draw on Erikson's concept of the 'identity crisis'.

The most that can therefore be said for phases of American psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream* is that there is a noticeable move away from what can be called fundamentalist Freudian psychoanalysis: what literary critic Kay Souter describes as 'an ossified and reified "Freud"', which she believes to be a waste of time.³ Hers is a harsh judgment, which could be applied to the first two papers on the *Dream* by Weston Gui and Gerald Jacobson, which exemplify classical Freudian analysis, although I would not want to dismiss them so readily. They are typical of that era of American psychoanalysis and they do make some interesting observations. Their strict adherence to reified aspects of Freud's work gives way in Goldstein's paper and its inclusion of identity crises. Goldstein may not acknowledge Erikson, but his paper is the first evidence of post-Freudian criticism related to the play. Even Goldstein is drawn into classical psychopathology in his analysis of Helena.

What is apparent in American psychoanalytic criticism in the latter part of the twentieth century into the present is a change in tone. There is a more imaginative exploration of psychoanalytic theory and the play: playing with ideas, yet not in the simplistic translation of symbols as in Gui, or the rigid application of the Oedipus complex as in Gui and Jacobson. There is still a speculative vein, but the interpretations are of a kind to which I respond, rather than react against. Possibilities for enriching the play are opened up rather than closed off.

³ Souter, 'The products of the imagination', p. 342.

I noted in my Introduction the predominance of American psychoanalytic critics over British or European psychoanalytic critics of the *Dream*. British psychoanalysis has developed somewhat differently from American psychoanalysis, and there has never been the same degree of applied psychoanalysis, even though there are illustrations and quotations from literature in clinical and theoretical papers. Most of the British psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream* comes from critics in other disciplines, who have a strong interest in psychoanalysis. I have in this thesis referred to chapters on the *Dream* by Margaret and Michael Rustin and by Meg Williams and Margot Waddell, in each case just one of the pair of authors being a psychoanalyst. Apart from these interpretations, the only other references are brief comments either on the play or on quotations from the play by a few contemporary psychoanalytic psychotherapists.

The major difference from American psychoanalytic criticism is that there is a clear prevalence of object relations theory, and references to various and distinctive leading proponents of the theory are obvious. Kay Souter suggests that literary criticism from a psychoanalytic perspective is ‘likely to concentrate on the issues that are of interest to relational and object relations psychoanalysis’.⁴ I see no evidence of that in American psychoanalytic criticism of the play to date. In Britain the picture is different. The development of object relations theory was both earlier than the 1970s American developments of self psychology, and has been generally accepted in slightly differing ways. Thus, though it is sparse, British psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream* refers to Melanie Klein, D. W. Winnicott, Wilfred Bion and other important figures in British psychoanalysis, key representatives of object relations theory. While these psychoanalytic giants also appear in more recent American psychoanalytic clinical

⁴ Souter, ‘The products of the imagination’, p. 345.

papers, they do not feature in psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream*, except where authored by literary critics.⁵

It is difficult to know precisely, given the absence of the employment of more recent psychoanalytic theories as critical tools, what psychoanalytic developments in America and Britain might otherwise yield if they were to be applied more fully to the *Dream*. I have suggested in Chapter 4 that there is much that could be gained from exploring further (as MacCary does) the characters in the play in the light of theories about narcissism or the development of the self. Similarly the notion of illusion and transference-love in psychoanalysis, briefly referred to by the English therapist Warren Colman and the American analyst Ellen Pinsky, contribute to reflection on the way the young men fall in and out of love, and could add to literary criticism's interest in patterns of love and imagination in the play.

Having been critical of the lack of interest in the developments in psychoanalytic theory, it may seem strange to be equally critical of the psychoanalytic critics for not knowing their Freud, or for having a rather blinkered knowledge of his writing. I have shown in a number of places that had there been reference to certain papers and ideas in Freud's oeuvre, some psychoanalytic readings could have been considerably strengthened. I suggested in chapter 3 that Goldstein could have found considerable support for his theory of comedy disguising terror in Freud's theory about the psychological function of humour. I have been particularly critical in chapter 4 of the failure to draw upon the breadth of Freud's writing on love relationships, with an over-concentration upon on the Oedipus complex. There is richness in Freud's writing on narcissism, on choices of love

⁵ There has been a similar time lag in Britain in relation to leading American figures such as Kohut and Kernberg.

object, and on transference love, which enhances reflection on the nature of love in the *Dream*. It is again the psychoanalytic-literary critics who show greater awareness of the breadth of Freud's work.

In contrast to the paucity of reference to literary criticism amongst psychoanalytic critics, psychoanalytic-literary critics show a familiarity not only with classical Freudian psychoanalysis, but also with later developments in psychoanalytic theory. They may be amateurs when it comes to psychoanalysis, but they show much greater knowledge, and in some instances more experience of this other discipline, than psychoanalyst critics show of theirs.

Thus they appear much better informed than psychoanalytic critics about some of the major figures in the development of psychoanalytic theory. In a later paper on psychoanalysis and literature (1993), for instance, Norman Holland refers to Donald Winnicott (1895-1971), a major British contributor to psychoanalysis; and to Jacques Lacan, although the latter might be expected given his significance for literary criticism. If it is argued that Winnicott was initially not well received by American psychoanalysis, the same argument could not explain why psychoanalytic critics ignore Kohut and Kernberg, immensely significant in more recent American psychoanalysis. Yet American literary critics such as Holland, Calderwood, MacCary and Frosch refer to them.

What is the purpose of the psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic-literary interpretations of the *Dream*?

Where psychoanalytic-literary critics publish in psychoanalytic journals their purpose is clearly to use psychoanalytic ideas to extend their interpretations of the *Dream*. It is less clear what might be the intention of psychoanalytic critics of the play. Do they wish to make a contribution to literary criticism? Do they want to show how relevant psychoanalysis is outside its clinical application? Or are they demonstrating how a psychological understanding of the characters in the play contributes to psychoanalytic theory and practice?

There is no evidence of the third of these possibilities. Indeed, although in psychoanalysis there are illustrations from literature to support psychoanalytic theories, there is very little evidence of examples from literature that actually inform clinical practice. There is nothing from the *Dream* that mirrors the British psychoanalyst Hannah Segal's drawing upon *Hamlet* in her work with an adolescent girl. Her schizophrenic patient had, like Ophelia, recently suffered the loss of her father. In one session the girl danced round the room, picking up imaginary things from the carpet and appearing to scatter them around her. At this point Segal was struck with the idea that 'she must have been imagining that she was dancing in a meadow, picking flowers and scattering them, and it occurred to me that she was behaving exactly like an actress playing the part of Shakespeare's Ophelia'.⁶ So remarkable was the likeness that, drawing upon her understanding of the mad scenes featuring Ophelia, Segal was able to engage with the apparent madness of her patient.

⁶ Hannah Segal, 'Depression in the schizophrenic', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 37 (1956), pp. 341-2.

The closest example of the use of the play to illustrate clinical practice is Stanley Palombo's paper on anxiety dreams and correction dreams (Chapter 1), although there is no direct link as in Segal to actual patients. He primarily uses Titania's and Demetrius's 'dream' experiences to illustrate his thesis of two types of dream, supporting laboratory research that Palombo had previously written about in theoretical papers. At the same time he makes an important point about the way their 'dreams' (if such they are) show how Titania and Demetrius move from situations fraught with anxiety to a resolution of their attachments respectively to the Indian boy and to Hermia.

More briefly the British psychoanalytic psychotherapists Warren Colman and James Fisher (Chapter 4) draw upon certain citations in the *Dream* in papers that are essentially about clinical situations. They illustrate arguments about the place of imagination and empathy in loving relationships. John Turner in the same chapter is more focused on the literary history of the term 'illusion', making a contribution to literary criticism as much as to psychoanalysis. In the course of his paper he shows the relevance of D. W. Winnicott and Marion Milner to aesthetics and epistemology. In all three instances their papers interpret psychological aspects of falling in and out of love, and therefore contribute to an understanding of that aspect of the play. There is a certainly a difference between the freshness of their papers and the earlier summaries in Chapter 4 of psychoanalytic critics on the Oedipus complex. It appears that for the most part (especially Vicky Hartman) the motive for their papers looks like a wish to present the universality of Oedipus complex.

On balance the papers discussed in this thesis, with their emphasis on applied psychoanalysis, are more about contributing to critical interpretation of the play and its

characters than to clinical work as such. Goldstein's paper on identity crises (Chapter 3) and on comedy as a disguise for terror is addressed as much to literary critics as to psychoanalytic practitioners, as is obvious from the title of his paper and its content, which is solely devoted to the play. Julius Heuscher's 'Theseus and Hippolyta on the Couch' (Chapter 4) is another example. Generally speaking where the subject matter focuses exclusively on the *Dream*, the intention appears to be to offer a psychoanalytic critique of the play. Grinstein's paper (Chapter 2) does not include the play in its title, and there is only a brief reference to it, but the argument there for the significance of a nested play within the whole is of relevance to literary criticism. The same applies to Balter's two papers on the nested dream and their relevance for nested art and the nested play (Chapter 2).

Title and subject matter are not necessarily an indication of literary purpose. Gui's paper, for example, is in his words 'an attempt to discover by the means of Freudian psychoanalysis the meaning of [Bottom's] dream and, if possible, the elements in the libidinous life of its creator that gave it origin'.⁷ Jacobson's follow-up to Gui, focussing on the oedipal situation for women in the play, is seen in his concluding remarks about the 'ageless unconscious ... in every man and woman'.⁸ Both readings are so heavily psychoanalytic that it is possible that both Gui and Jacobson wish to link the genius of Shakespeare and the genius of Freud, that Shakespeare prefigures and therefore validates the originality of Freud, and Freud validates Shakespeare's psychological perception.⁹

⁷ Gui, 'Bottom's dream', p. 251.

⁸ Jacobson, 'A note on Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream"', p. 26.

⁹ Harold Bloom turns this on its head, proposing a Shakespearean reading of Freud rather than a Freudian reading of Shakespeare (*The Western Canon* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994), pp. 372-94).

Many of the papers that feature shorter references to the *Dream* are not specific contributions to literary criticism. Yet even if such allusions to the *Dream* serve the theory and practice of psychoanalysis rather than literary criticism, these observations and interpretations also further interpretation of the play from a psychoanalytic perspective.

Conclusion

Psychoanalysis and literary criticism have in common that their research interests range from objective enquiry into known evidence to the more subjective nature of interpretation. For example research into psychoanalytic theory and practice can involve a statistical approach and a scientific inquiry; and literary criticism can concentrate upon historical context, lexicology and semantics, or textual variations. But both applied psychoanalytic criticism and literary criticism can be more speculative, since texts, like persons, can be viewed from different perspectives. The form of literary criticism that values psychoanalysis is an example of that. Even a glance at Dorothea Kehler's brilliant review of what is in fact just a sample of literary criticism of the *Dream* shows how numerous the interpretations are of the play, and how rich they are in variety, sometimes showing similar ideas, more often not than demonstrating differing views. One of the critics she refers to, Stephen Fender, states that '[t]he real meaning of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is that no one "meaning" can be extracted from the puzzles with which a fiction presents its audience'.¹⁰

To use the phrase 'real meaning' is misconceived, as doubtful as Gui's conclusion that Shakespeare wrote the play to work through his childhood rivalry with his younger

¹⁰ Kehler, *A Midsummer Night's Dream: A bibliographic survey*, pp. 3-76. The specific reference is to Stephen Fender, *Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: Edward Arnold, 1968), p. 61.

brother. Fender seems to suggest that Shakespeare's intention was to write so many puzzles into his text that many meanings could be seen in it. Substitute 'real *situation*' and Fender is near the mark, since what is clear from a comparison of much literary criticism of the play and all psychoanalytic criticism of it, is that many meanings can be ascribed to the *Dream*, any one of which may provide the reader or the member of the audience with a possible way of appreciating it.

It is in this sense that psychoanalytic criticism of the *Dream* has its own distinctive contribution to make, sometimes supporting parallel interpretations in literary criticism, even if coming at the text from a different angle. My intention in this thesis has been to draw attention to a largely neglected body of writing by psychoanalysts on the *Dream* – neglected both by psychoanalytic critics and literary critics. This writing is more than of historical interest. It makes a definite contribution to literary criticism, provoking fresh interpretations and the ability to initiate new critical debate. I hope at the same time that I have demonstrated to psychoanalytic psychotherapists both the richness of these interpretations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from their own colleagues, and the contribution that literary criticism of it might make to psychoanalytic theory, encouraging them to engage in a similar way with the play.

References

- Abend, S., 'Book notices', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 31 (1983), pp. 344-8.
- Adler, E., 'The effacing of the Oedipus complex', *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 30 (2010), pp. 541-547.
- Altman, N., 'Whiteness', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 75 (2006) pp. 45-72.
- American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th Edition (Washington, DC: APA, latest edition 2013).
- Armstrong, Philip, *Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 2001).
- Asadir, Vance, *The Shakespearean object: psychoanalysis, subjectivity and the gaze*, Ph.D thesis, University of Stirling, 2000.
- Balter, L., 'Nested ideation and the problem of reality', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 74 (2005), pp. 661-701.
- Balter, L., 'Nested ideation and the problem of reality: dreams and works of art in works of art' *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 75 (2006), pp. 404-45.
- Barber, C. L., *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton University Press, 2011).
- Barnett, B., 'Review of *The Dream Discourse Today*, edited by Sara Flanders', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79 (1998) pp. 623-6.
- Bartolovich, C., Hillman D. and Howard J., *Marx and Freud, Great Shakespeareans*, Vol. X (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).
- Bradley, A. C., *Shakespearean Tragedy*, second ed. (London: Macmillan, 1905).
- Bate, Jonathan, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
- Bate, Jonathan, *The Genius of Shakespeare* (London: Picador, 2008).

- Bates, Catherine, 'Love and courtship', in Alexander Leggatt ed. *Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 102-122.
- Baudry, Francis, 'An essay on method in applied psychoanalysis', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 53 (1984), pp. 551-81.
- Bergmann, M. S., 'Platonic love, transference love, and love in real life,' *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 30 (1982), pp. 87-111.
- Bergmann, M. S., 'Freud's three theories of love in the light of later developments', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 36 (1988), pp. 653-72.
- Bettelheim, Bruno, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, (London: Penguin Books, 1978).
- Bloom, Harold, *The Invention of the Human* (London: Fourth Estate, 1989).
- Bloom, Harold, *The Western Canon* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994).
- Brenner, C., 'Some comments on technical precepts in psychoanalysis', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 17 (1969), p. 333-52.
- Brook, Peter, *The Shifting Point* (London: Methuen Drama, 1989).
- Brooks, Harold, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London, Methuen, 1979).
- Brown, Carolyn, *Shakespeare and Psychoanalytic Theory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
- Brown, Norman O., *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959).
- Buccola, Regina ed., *A Midsummer Night's Dream: a Critical Guide* (London: Continuum Books, 2010).
- Burnham, J. ed., *After Freud Left: a Century of Psychoanalysis in America* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012).
- Calderwood, James, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992).

- Carroll, D. A. and Williams, G. J., *A Midsummer Night's Dream: an Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1986).
- Chambers, E. K. *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930).
- Chessick, R. D., 'Passionate love', *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry*, 27 (1999), pp. 515-521.
- Chodorow, Nancy, *Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities* (London: Free Association Books, 1994).
- Chodorow, Nancy, 'Gender on the modern-postmodern and classical-relational divide: untangling history and epistemology', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 53 (2005), pp. 1097-1118.
- Clark, R., *Freud: the Man and the Cause* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1980).
- Colman, Warren, 'Love, desire and infatuation: encountering the erotic spirit', *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 39 (1994), pp. 497-514.
- Coronado, Celestino, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [TV film, 1985].
- Davies, J. M., 'The times we sizzle, and the times we sigh: the multiple erotics of arousal, anticipation, and release', *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 16 (2006), pp. 665-86.
- Dent, R. W., 'Imagination in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15.2 (1964), pp. 115-29.
- Dunn, Allen 'The Indian Boy's dream wherein every mother's son rehearses his part: Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Shakespeare Studies* 20 (1988), pp. 15-32.
- Dutton, Richard, ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Contemporary Critical Essays*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), pp. 61-83.
- Edel, L., 'Literary criticism and psychoanalysis', *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1965),

pp. 151-63.

‘Editorial’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1920), pp. 3-5.

Eissler, K. R., ‘Fortinbras and Hamlet’, *American Imago*, 25 (1968), pp. 199-223.

Endleman, R., ‘Reflections on the human revolution’, *Psychoanalytic Review*, 53B (1966), pp. 5-24.

Erikson, E. H., *Childhood and Society* (London: Penguin Books, 1965).

Erikson, E. H., ‘The eight ages of man’, *International Journal of Psychiatry*, 2 (1966), pp. 281-300.

Erikson, E. H., *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968).

Faber, M. D., ‘Hermia’s dream: royal road to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*’, *Literature and Psychology*, 22 (1972), pp. 179-90.

Farber, Ada, ‘Freud’s love letters: intimations of psychoanalytic theory’, *Psychoanalytic Review*, 65 (1978), pp. 166-189.

Farnell, Frederic, ‘Erotism as portrayed in literature’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 1, (1920), pp. 496-413.

Felman, Shoshana, ed., *Literature and Psychoanalysis. The Question of Reading: Otherwise* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 1-10.

Fender, Stephen, *Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (London: Edward Arnold, 1968).

Ferenczi, Sandor ‘Open letter’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1920), pp. 1-2.

Fish, Stanley, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

Fisher, James V., “‘Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind’: the Death and Rebirth of Imagination’, *Journal of the British Association of Psychotherapists*, 42.2 (2004), pp. 101-15.

- Flanders, Sara, ed., *The Dream Discourse Today* (London: Routledge, 1993).
- Foakes, R. A. ed., *William Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream*, updated ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- Forrest, D.V., 'Language as object – and subject', *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalytic Dynamic Psychiatry*, 11 (1983), pp. 513-529.
- Forrester, J., *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Frankiel, R.V., 'The stolen child: a fantasy, a wish, a source of countertransference', *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 12 (1985), pp. 417-430.
- Frattaroli, E. J., 'On the validity of treating Shakespeare's characters as if they were real people', *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought*, 10 (1987), pp. 407-37.
- Freake, Douglas 'A comic version of the Theseus myth', in D. Kehler ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London Routledge, 2001), pp. 241-74.
- Freedman, Barbara, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).
- Freud E. L., ed, *Letters of Sigmund Freud 1873-1939* (New York: Basic Books, 1961).
- Freud, Sigmund, 'Draft N', 1892, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume I (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1966), pp. 254-6.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'The Psychotherapy of Hysteria', 1893, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume II (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955), pp. 253-305.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'Extracts from the Fliess Papers', 1897, *Standard Edition*, Volume I, (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1966), pp. 263-6.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'The Interpretation of Dreams', 1900, *The Standard Edition of the*

Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume IV (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1953), pp. ix-627.

Freud, Sigmund, 'Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious', 1905, *Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume VIII (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1960), pp. 1-247.

Freud, Sigmund, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', 1905, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume VII (London Institute of Psychoanalysis and the Hogarth Press, 1953), pp. 123-246.

Freud, Sigmund, 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*', 1907, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume IX (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1959), pp. 1-96.

Freud, Sigmund, "'Civilized" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness', 1908. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume IX (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1959), pp. 177-204.

Freud, Sigmund, 'Creative writers and day-dreaming', 1908, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume IX (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1959) p. 141-54.

Freud, Sigmund, 'Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood', 1910, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XI (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1957), pp. 57-138.

Freud, Sigmund, 'A Special Type of Choice of Object made by Men', 1910, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and the Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 163-176.

- Freud, Sigmund, 'Wild Analysis', 1910, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 219-228.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love', 1912, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and the Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 177-190.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'The occurrence in dreams of material from fairy tales', 1913, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XII (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1958), pp. 279-88.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'The Theme of the Three Caskets,' 1913, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XII (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1958) pp. 289-302.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood', 1910, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XI (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1957), pp. 57-138.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'The Moses of Michelangelo', 1914, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XIII (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955), pp. 209-38.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'On Narcissism', 1914, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XIV (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and the Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 109-140.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'Observations on Transference-love', 1915, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XII (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1958), pp.157-171.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis', 1916, *The Standard Edition of*

the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XV (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1963), pp. 1-240.

Freud, Sigmund, 'Some character-types met with in psychoanalytic work', 1916, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XIV (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 319-23.

Freud, Sigmund, 'The Taboo of Virginity', 1918, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and the Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 191-208.

Freud, Sigmund. 'The "Uncanny"', 1919, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XVII (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1955), pp. 217-256.

Freud, Sigmund, 'The psychogenesis of a case of female homosexuality', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1920), pp.125-149.

Freud, Sigmund, 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego', 1921, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XVIII (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1955), pp. 65-144.

Freud, Sigmund 'Two encyclopaedia articles', 1923, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XVIII (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955), pp. 235-239.

Freud, Sigmund, 'The Future of an Illusion', 1927, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XXI, London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 1-56.

Freud, Sigmund, 'Humour', 1927, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XXI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 159-166.

- Freud, Sigmund, 'Civilization and Its Discontents', 1930, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XXI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 57-146.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'Female Sexuality', 1931, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XXI (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 221-224.
- Freud, Sigmund, 'New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis', 1933, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XXII (London: Institute of Psychoanalysis and Hogarth Press, 1964), pp. 1-182.
- Friedman, L., 'A reading of Freud's papers on technique', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 60 (1991), pp. 564-595.
- Frosch, T. R. 'The missing child in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *American Imago*, 64.4 (2007), pp. 485-512.
- Gabbard, G. O., 'Overview and commentary', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 70 (2001), pp. 287-96.
- Gabbard, G. O., "'Bound in a nutshell": thoughts on complexity, reductionism, and "infinite space"', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 88 (2007), pp. 559-74.
- Garber, Marjorie, *Dream in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis* (Yale University Press, 1974/ new edition, 2013).
- Gardner, Helen, *Shakespearean and Other Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).
- Garner, Shirley Nelson, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "Jack shall have Jill; Nought shall go ill"', *Women's Studies*, 9.1 (1981), pp. 47-63.
- Gilligan, Carol, *The Birth of Pleasure: A New Map of Love* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).
- Gilligan, Carol, 'Recovering Psyche: reflections on life-history and history', *Annual of*

Psychoanalysis, 32 (2004), pp. 131-147.

Goldstein, M., 'Identity crises in a midsummer nightmare: comedy as terror in disguise'

Psychoanalytic Review, 60 (1973), pp. 169-204.

Green, Douglas E., 'Preposterous pleasures: queer theories and A Midsummer Night's

Dream' in Dorothea Kehler ed., *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 369-97.

Greenberg, Bette and Rothenberg, Albert, 'William Shakespeare (1564-1616) Medico-psychological and psychoanalytic studies on his life and works: a bibliography',

International Review of Psychoanalysis, 1 (1974), pp. 245-254.

Greenblatt, Stephen, 'Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture', in S. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

Greenblatt, Stephen, 'Commentary on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', in S. Greenblatt, ed. *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 1997), pp. 805-814.

Greenblatt, Stephen, 'The death of Hamnet and the making of Hamlet', *New York Review of Books*, October 21, 2004.

Greene, J. R., *America in the Sixties* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010).

Greenfield, Thelma, 'Our Nightly Madness: Shakespeare's *Dream* with *The Interpretation of Dreams*', in Dorothea Kehler ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Critical Essays* (New York, Garland, 1998), pp. 331-44.

Grinstein, A., 'The dramatic device: a play within a play', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4 (1956), pp. 49-52.

Gui, W.A., 'Bottom's dream', *American Imago*, 9 (1952), pp. 251-305.

Hackett, Helen, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers, 1997).

- Halio, Jay, *Shakespeare in Performance: A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, second ed. 2003).
- Halliwell, M., *American Culture in the 1950s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
- Hartman, V. S. 'A *Midsummer Night's Dream*: a gentle concord to the oedipal problem', *American Imago*, 40 (1983), pp. 355-69.
- Hepburn, James, 'A dream that hath no bottom', Minute of the 6th annual meeting of the Discussion Group General Topics 10 (Chicago, Illinois: Modern Language Association, 27 December 1963), pp. 3-6.
- Heuscher, J. E., 'Theseus and Hippolyta on the couch', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 49 (1989), pp. 319-27.
- Hinely, Jan Lawson, 'Expounding the dream: shaping fantasies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', in M. Charney and J. Reppen eds, *Psychoanalytic Approaches to Literature and Film* (Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987), pp. 120-38.
- Hitchcock, Alfred, *Spellbound* (1945), (Fremantle Media International DVD: VFC20263).
- Hoffman, Michael, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Twentieth Century Fox, 2002, 14252DVD).
- Hofstadter, R., *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage, 1962).
- Hoge, Hilary, 'Dreams within dreams; books within books', *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 18 (2008), pp. 1-26.
- Holland, Norman, 'Romeo's dream and the paradox of literary realism', *Literature and Psychology*, 13 (1963), pp. 97-104.
- Holland, Norman, *Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966).
- Holland, Norman, *The Dynamics of Literary Response* (New York: Oxford University Press,

1968).

Holland, Norman, 'Hermia's dream', *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 7 (1979), pp. 369-389.

Holland, Norman, 'Psychoanalysis and literature – past and present', *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 29.1 (1993), pp. 5-21.

Holland, Norman 'Reader-response criticism', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79 (1998), pp. 1203-11.

Holland, Peter, ed., *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Hollindale, Peter, *Critical Studies: A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: Penguin Books, 1992).

Homan, Sidney, 'The single world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *The Bucknell Review*, 1 (1969), pp. 72-84.

Horney, K., 'The denial of the vagina – a contribution to the problem of the genital anxieties specific to women,' *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 14 (1933), pp. 57-70.

Hyman, S. E., *The Armed Vision* (New York: Knopf, 1947).

Jacobs, Michael, *Illusion: a Psychodynamic Interpretation of Thinking and Belief* (London, Whurr Publications, 2000).

Jacobs, Michael, *Shakespeare on the Couch* (London: Karnac, 2008).

Jacobs, Michael, *Psychodynamic Counselling in Action* (London: Sage, 4th edition, 2010).

Jacobs, Michael, *The Presenting Past: the Core of Psychodynamic Counselling and Therapy* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 4th edition, 2012).

Jacobs, Michael, 'Naming and labelling', in M. Jacobs, *Our Desire of Unrest* (London: Karnac, 2009), pp. 33-52.

- Jacobson, G. F., 'A note on Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream"', *American Imago*, 19 (1962), pp. 21-6.
- Jones, Ernest, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (New York: Doubleday & Co, Inc., 1949).
- Kanzer, M., 'The central theme in Shakespeare's works', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 38 (1951), pp. 1-16.
- Kanzer, M., 'Imagery in King Lear', *American Imago*, 22 (1965), pp. 3-13.
- Kaplan, Morton, 'The *American Imago* in retrospect: an article-review', *Literature and Psychology*, 13 (1963), pp. 112-16.
- Kehler, Dorothea, 'A *Midsummer Night's Dream*: a Bibliographic Survey of the Criticism', in Dorothea Kehler ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Critical Essays* (New York, Garland, 1998), pp. 3-67.
- Kehler, Dorothea, 'The critical backstory and the state of the art', in Regina Buccola ed., *A Midsummer Night's Dream: a Critical Guide* (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 15-43.
- Kennedy J. M. and Kennedy R. M., eds, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: The Athlone Press, 1999).
- Kernberg, O. F. 'Institutional problems of psychoanalytic education', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 34 (1986), pp. 799-834.
- Kernberg, O. F., *Love Relations: Normality and Pathology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
- Kernberg, O.F., 'Identity: recent findings and clinical implications', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 75 (2006), pp. 969-1003.
- Kerr, David, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (BBC TV film, first broadcast May 30th 2016).
- Khan, Masud, 'The changing use of dreams in psychoanalytic practice – in search of the dreaming experience', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 57 (1976), pp. 325-30.

- King, Pearl and Steiner, Riccardo eds, *The Freud-Klein Controversies 1941-45* (London: Routledge, 1991).
- Klein, M., 'Early stages of the Oedipus conflict', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 9 (1928), pp. 167-80.
- Knights, L. C. 'How many children had Lady Macbeth?' (1933) In L. C. Knights, *'Hamlet' and Other Shakespearean Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
- Kohut, Heinz, *The Analysis of the Self* (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1971).
- Kott, Jan, 'Titania and the Ass's head', in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974).
- Kott, Jan, *The Bottom Translation* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1987).
- Kris, Ernst, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (New York: International Universities Press, 1952).
- Lasch, Christopher, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979).
- Leggatt, Alexander, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love* (London, Methuen, 1974).
- Lentzner, J.R. and Ross, D. R., 'The dreams that blister sleep: latent content and cinematic form in *Mulholland Drive*', *American Imago*, 62 (2005), pp. 101-23.
- Leowald, Hans, 'The waning of the Oedipus complex', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 27 (1979), pp. 751-775.
- Levey, Christine, 'A bibliography of psychological and psychoanalytic Shakespeare criticism', in B. J. Sokol ed., *The Undiscover'd Country: New essays in psychoanalysis and Shakespeare* (London: Free Associations Press, 1993), pp. 217-48.
- Levine, H.B., 'Reflections on catastrophic change', *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*,

18 (2009), pp. 77-81.

Levy, Peter B., *America in the Sixties – Right, Left and Center* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998).

Lewis, Allan, 'A *Midsummer Night's Dream* – Fairy Fantasy or Erotic Nightmare', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 21 (1969), pp. 251-8.

Lipschitz, F., 'The dream within a dream – proflection vs. reflection', *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 26 (1990), pp. 716-31.

Lunbeck, Elizabeth 'Heinz Kohut's Americanisation of Freud', in J. Burnham ed., *After Freud Left: a Century of Psychoanalysis in America* Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2012), pp. 209-31.

Lynch, David, *Mulholland Drive* (Studio Canal, 2001) DFD04004.

MacCary, W. Thomas, *Friends and Lovers: The Phenomenology of Desire in Shakespearean Comedy* (New York. Columbia University Press, 1985).

McPeck, James, 'The Psyche myth and A *Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 23.1 (1972), pp. 69-79.

Maher, Mary, "A *Midsummer Night's Dream*: *Nightmare or Gentle Snooze?*", in Dorothea Kehler ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Critical Essays* (New York, Garland, 1998), pp. 429-50.

Mahon, E. J., 'Dreams within dreams', *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 57 (2002), pp. 118-30.

Marcia J., 'Development and validation of ego identity status', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3.5 (1966), pp. 551-8.

Marcus, Mordecai, 'A *Midsummer Night's Dream*: the dialectic of Eros-Thanatos'. *American Imago*, 38 (1981), pp. 269-78.

Marcuse, Herbert, *Eros and Civilization: a philosophical inquiry into Freud* (Boston, Mass.:

Beacon Press, 1955).

Marshall, David. 'Exchanging visions: reading A Midsummer Night's Dream', *English Literary History*, 49.3 (1982), pp. 543-75.

Marwick, Arthur, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Masserman, J. D., Berkwits, G. and Pauncz, A., 'The neuroses', in E. A. Spiegel ed., *Progress in Neurology and Psychiatry*, Volume IX, (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1964), pp. 507-24.

Masson, Jeffrey, ed., *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887-1904* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1985).

Meltzer, D., 'The Paranoid-Schizoid and Depressive Positions', in Meg Harris Williams ed. *Adolescence: Talks and Papers by Donald Meltzer and Martha Harris*, (London: Karnac Books, 2011), pp. 103-116.

Murnau, F. W., *Nosferatu* (1922, British Film Institute DVD).

Miller, Raeburn 'The persons of Moonshine: A Midsummer-Night's Dream and the "disfigurement" of realities', in Rima Drell Reck ed., *Explorations of Literature* (Baton Rouge, La.; Louisiana State University Press, 1966), pp. 25-31.

Milner, Marion, 'The role of illusion in symbol formation', in M. Klein, P. Heimann, S. Isaacs, and J. Riviere, eds *New Directions in Psycho-Analysis* (London: Tavistock, 1955).

Mitchell, S. A., 'Psychodynamics, homosexuality, and the question of pathology', *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 3 (2002), pp. 3-21.

Montrose, Louis, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theater* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996).

- Montrose, Louis, 'A kingdom of shadows', in D. Kehler ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Critical Essays* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 226-40.
- Naiman, J., 'Review of L'Inconscient du Politique (The Unconscious of Politics) by Pierre Kauffman (Paris: 1988)', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 59 (1990), pp. 160-2.
- Noble, Adrian, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [DVD] (United Kingdom: Channel 4, 2001).
- O'Boyle, Patricia, *Staging imagination: transformations of Shakespeare in Wordsworth and Coleridge*, Ph. D thesis, Durham University, 2008.
- Palombo, S. R., 'The genius of the dream', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 43 (1983), pp. 301-313.
- Paskauskas, R. A. and Steiner, R., *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones 1908-1939* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993).
- Peck, J. S. 'Anti-intellectualism: psychoanalytic notes on a cultural trait', *American Imago*, 20 (1963), pp. 385-91.
- Pedder, J. R., 'The role of space and location in psychotherapy, play and theatre', *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 4 (1977), pp. 215-23.
- Person, Ethel Spector, *Love and Fateful Encounters: the Power of Romantic Passion* (London: Bloomsbury, 1989).
- Pinsky, E., 'The potion: reflections on Freud's "Observations on Transference-Love"', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytical Association*, 62 (2014), pp. 455-74.
- Ponti, Emanuela, *Performing dreams in England and Spain, 1570-1670*. PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2010.
- Puttenham, George, *The Art of English Poesy*, F. Whigham and W. Rehorn eds. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP (1589/2007).
- Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing: <http://www.pep-web.org>.

- Rashkin, Esther, 'Reading the mind, reading the text: reflective functioning, trauma literature and the task of the psychoanalytic critic', *American Imago*, 68.1 (2011), pp. 37-48.
- Ravich, R.A., 'A psychoanalytic study of Shakespeare's early plays', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 33 (1964), pp. 388-410.
- Ray, Nicholas, *Tragedy and otherness: Sophocles, Shakespeare, psychoanalysis*, Ph.D thesis, University of Warwick, 2002.
- Reinhardt, Max, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1935, Korean DVD.
- Richmond, Hugh, *Shakespeare's Sexual Comedy: A Mirror for Lovers* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971).
- Roazen, Paul, 'Two interviews with Reik', *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 23 (2006), pp. 676-83.
- Roland, A., 'Toward a reorientation of psychoanalytic literary criticism', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 65 (1978), pp. 391-414.
- Rosenfeld, E., 'The Pan-headed Moses – a Parallel', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 32 (1951), pp. 83-93.
- Ross, Dorothy, 'Freud, anxiety and the cold war', in J. Burnham ed., *After Freud Left: a Century of Psychoanalysis in America* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), pp. 163-88.
- Rothenberg, A. B., 'Infantile fantasies in Shakespearian metaphor, III: photophobia, love of darkness, and "black" complexions', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 64 (1977), pp. 173-202.
- Rubinstein, F., 'Shakespeare's dream-stuff: a forerunner of Freud's "dream-material"', *American Imago*, 43 (1986), pp. 335-355.
- Rustin, Margaret and Rustin, Michael, *Mirror to Nature: Drama, Psychoanalysis and Society* (London: Karnac, 2002).

- Rycroft, C., 'Reminiscences of a survivor: psychoanalysis 1937-1993', *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 11 (1995), pp. 453-7.
- Schafer, R., 'The interpretation of transference and the conditions for loving', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 25.3 (1977), pp. 335-362.
- Schwartz, Murray M. and Kahn, Coppelia, eds, *Representing Shakespeare* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).
- Segal, Hannah, 'Depression in the schizophrenic', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 37 (1956), pp. 339-343.
- Segal, M. M., 'Transvestitism as an impulse and as a defence', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 46 (1965), pp. 209-17.
- Selbourne, David, *The Making of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'* (London: Faber and Faber, 1982).
- Sieglman, A. J., 'Exhibitionism and fascination', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 12 (1964), pp. 315-335.
- Silber, A., 'A significant "dream within a dream"', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 31(1983), pp. 899-915.
- Sinason, Valerie, 'Review of "Literary Criticism and Psychoanalysis: Partners or Millstones?"', *Free Associations*, 1 (1986), pp. 51-63.
- Sinker, Mark, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', *Sight and Sound*, 7.1 (1997), p. 41.
- Slights, William, 'The changeling in the Dream', *Studies in English Literature*, 28.2 (1988), pp. 259-72.
- Smith, Christian, *Shakespeare's influence on Marx, Freud and the Frankfurt school critical theorists*, Ph.D thesis, University of Warwick, 2012.
- Souter, K. T., 'The products of the imagination: psychoanalytic theory and postmodern literary criticism', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 60 (2000), pp. 341-359.

- Spivack, Melvin, *A Shakespeare Concordance*, Vol. 1 (Hildesheim, Germany: George Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968).
- Spurgeon, C., *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935).
- Stanger, M., 'Abstract of "Hermia's dream"', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 51 (1982), p. 479.
- Staton, Walter, 'Ovidian elements in A Midsummer Night's Dream', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 26 (1963), pp. 165-70.
- Stetner, S. C., 'Baptista and his daughters', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 60 (1973), pp. 223-37.
- Stewart, J. I. M., *Character and Motive in Shakespeare: Some Recent Appraisals Examined* (London: Longmans, Green, 1949).
- Taylor, Gary, *Reinventing Shakespeare* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989).
- Taylor, Michael, 'The darker purpose of A Midsummer Night's Dream', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 9.2 (1969), pp. 259-73.
- Tredell, Nicolas, *Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream – a Reader's guide to Essential Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- Turner, J. F., 'A brief history of illusion', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 83 (2002), pp. 1063-82.
- Updike, John, *Couples* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1968).
- van Es, Bart, *Shakespeare in Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Waddell, M., "'A local habitation and a name": the therapeutic encounter and the quest for meaning', *Fort Da*, 9 (2003), pp. 48-69.
- Willbern, David, 'William Shakespeare: a bibliography of psychoanalytic and psychological criticism, 1964–1975', *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 5 (1978), pp. 361-71.
- Williams, Meg Harris and Waddell, Margot eds. *The Chamber of Maiden Thought* (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1991).

Wilson Knight, G., *The Shakespearian Tempest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932).

Winnicott, D. W., *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1965).

Wolf, A., 'Diegophrenia and genius', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 40 (1980), pp. 213-226.

Wright, Elizabeth, *Psychoanalytic Criticism: a Reappraisal*, second ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).